ONE and TWENTY
SERMONS
ON
SEVERAL
OCCASIONS.

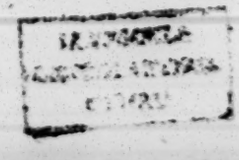
By THOMAS NEWLIN, M.A. late Fellow of *Magdalene* College in *OXFORD*.

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Where may be had Volume the Firſt, containing Eighteen Sermons, by the ſame Author.



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SERMONS

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SEVERAL

OCCASIONS

THE

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Fear and Diſquiet the neceſſary Conſequences of Sin.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At MAGDALENE College, on St. *John Baptiſt*'s Day, 1720.

Iſaiah LVII. 20, 21.

The Wicked are like a troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the Wicked.

THE God of Juſtice and Power has threaten'd to *rain Storm and Tempeſt upon the Wicked: This ſhall be their Portion* in the other World. Pſ. 11. 6.

And there is nothing can give us ſo juſt a Notion of their Diſtraction, their Anguiſh,

their Confuſion, even in this Life, as the Compariſon which the Holy Spirit of God has made in the Words of the Text.

When they are labouring under a Senſe of Guilt, and an Apprehenſion of Puniſhment, their reſtleſs Minds are wrought up into the higheſt Ferment, torn with contrary Paſſions, and toſs'd to and fro with Fear and Anxiety: And as the boiling Waters *caſt up Mire and Dirt from the Bottom of the great Deep*, ſo the *raging Waves* of their troubled Hearts, throw up all their Filth and Corruption from their ſecret Hiding-places, and are perpetually *foaming out their own Shame.*

Jude 13.

When their Iniquity comes up before them, it covers them with *the Blackneſs of Darkneſs.* And when the Light breaks in upon them, it affrights them, like the ſudden Flaſhes of Lightning, which add Horror to the Night of Storm and Tempeſt.

This is actually their Caſe, as we are aſſur'd by him, who knows the Secrets of the Heart, and throughly diſcerns the Paſſion, the Shame, the Fear, the Melancholly and Deſpair which torment *a wounded Spirit.*

And as they do actually ſuffer this amazing Puniſhment, ſo it is abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhould; for it is grounded upon the unchangeable Nature of Things, and the eternal Difference between Good and Evil: and how much ſoever, the Maſters in Iniquity may boaſt of their imaginary Strength; tho' they promiſe themſelves Liberty and Peace, and in the Pride of their Hearts, pretend

tend to enjoy the greateſt Satisfaction; yet their Hopes are vain, their Promiſes deceitful: *For there is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the Wicked. Their Sins are Spears and Arrows,* and they pierce them through *like a ſharp Sword:* and they know not which Way to turn themſelves, for they have no Grounds to ſupport their Confidence.

And we ought to adore the Goodneſs of God, for making their Guilt ſo uneaſy to them: for if we have any Tenderneſs for our ſelves, certainly this immediate Puniſhment of Sin, muſt deterr us from *walking in the Counſel of the ungodly:* or if we are ſo fooliſh, as to purchaſe this Diſquiet, by entring into the Paths of Wickedneſs; yet as ſoon as we have gotten this ſad Experience, one would think it ſhould effectually diſcourage us from *ſtanding in the Way of Sinners, or ſitting in the Seat of the Scornful.* That it may have this happy Effect upon us, Let us PJ. 1. 1.

Firſt, Conſider the dreadful Condition of thoſe Men, who *are like a troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* And,

Secondly, The Cauſes of their Diſquiet, or why *there can be no Peace to the Wicked.*

And *Firſt,* We are to conſider the dreadful Condition of thoſe Men, who *are like a troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.*

The great Creator of the World has plac'd every Thing in a wonderful Order; but he has ſhewn the exacteſt Care in Man, The Chief of his earthly Creatures. All his Faculties are appointed to anſwer ſome important End, and are plac'd in a regular Subordination to one another, for the certain Attainment of it. And whilſt he obeys the Author of his Being, and keeps the Rank in which he was ordain'd to move, there is a moſt delightful Harmony in his Breaſt; His Reaſon commanding him to do his Duty; His Affections quickening him in the Performance of it; His Will rejoicing to diſcharge it; and His Conſcience applauding him for it, and giving a pleaſing Foretaſt of the Favour and Approbation of God.

But if he indulges his ſinful Appetites, His Affections become unruly, and get the Dominon over him; His Will urges him on to his Deſtruction, at the Command of every Paſſion; His Reaſon is forc'd to ſtoop to thoſe Actions which it loaths and abhorrs; and His Conſcience continually purſues him with the juſt Complaints of the Injuries which he has offer'd to it.

And the Puniſhment which he inflicts upon himſelf is the more grievous, becauſe *the Arrow ſticks faſt in him*, and cleaves to his Soul. There are many Arguments to alleviate and take off the Edge of worldly Evils, which can bring no Relief under the Torments of a guilty Conſcience. For thoſe are ſometime at a diſtance from us, and we may hope to eſcape,

eſcape, or partly divert them: or if they fall upon us, they may only affect the Body, while the Mind retires into it ſelf, and enjoys its proper Happineſs. But the Sinner has no Place to flee unto; no Fence againſt himſelf. He is his own Tormenter, and the Senſe of his Sin and Folly poſſeſſes all the Retirements of his Heart, and fills every Faculty of his Soul. It is *about his Path, and about his Bed, and* follows *him in all his Ways.*

And that All-ſeeing God, who is preſent with us in every Occurrence, and in every Thought, will not ſuffer him to eſcape from his Boſom-enemy, but conſtrains him to cry out in the Bitterneſs of his Anguiſh, *Whither ſhall I go from my wounded Spirit? Whither ſhall I go from its Preſence? If I* endeavour to *climb up into Heaven,* it oppreſſes me with a Weight that is intolerable; *If I go down to Hell,* there it will be *a Worm that will never die; a Fire that never will be quench'd: If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea,* there I ſhall behold a Reſemblance of my Condition; and when I hear *the Sea and the Waves roaring, and ſee the Hearts of Men failing them for Fear,* I ſhall feel a greater Diſorder in my own Breaſt, and be more violently ſhaken with the Confuſion of my own Thoughts; *If I ſay peradventure the darkneſs ſhall cover me,* the ungrateful Light will ſhew my Guilt, and diſplay all my Shame, with a bright and glaring Evidence.

It was This Senſe of Guilt, this terrible Conviction, that ſtung the accurſed *Cain,* when

Gen. 4. 13, 14. *he ſaid unto the Lord, my Puniſhment is greater than I can bear. Behold* (ſays he) *thou haſt driven me out this Day from the Face of the Earth, and from thy Face I ſhall be hid. And I ſhall be a Fugitive and a Vagabond in the Earth.* But His Puniſhment was render'd more exquiſite by a firm Aſſurance, that though he wander'd to and fro, he could not fly from himſelf, and whereſoever he was, he would ſtill *be found out by this his Enemy.* In the moſt diſtant Countries, he would be forc'd to hear the Cries of his Conſcience; and every one whom he met, would bring to his Remembrance, the Murther of his Brother.

The Conſcience of the Wicked is always *writing bitter things againſt them*; and every Accident renews the Thoughts of their paſt Iniquity, and takes off the Veil of Forgetfulneſs: and it appears in all its Horror and Deformity, in the Day of Evil: when outward Calamities ſtraiten and beſiege them, then they feel the moſt ſharp and piercing Agonies within; and when the World frowns upon them, they can have no Comfort from themſelves; no Proſpect of any Thing, but Hell gaping before them.

How did the *Hearts of Joſeph's Brethren ſmite and reproach them*, when they were driven by Famine into *Egypt*, whither they had ſent their innocent Brother, and when they were brought into a ſeeming Neceſſity, either of ſnatching the Comfort of *Jacob*'s old Age from his affectionate Embraces, or of ſuffering Bonds, Impriſonment, and Death! Then

Then they were forc'd to acknowledge, that *they were verily guilty concerning their Brother*; and they could expect no Relief, no Compaſſion, *becauſe they ſaw the Anguiſh of his Soul when he beſought them, and they would not hear*; and were their Affliction the greateſt that could be endur'd, yet they could not but allow of the Equity of their Puniſhment; *Therefore is this Diſtreſs come upon us.* Gen.42.21

Guilt is naturally attended with Fear and Suſpicion; and the Soul that is polluted with it, is in perpetual Dread of a watchful Eye that looks down upon it, and an almighty Hand that is ready to puniſh it. And the leaſt Appearance of Danger ſounds the Alarm, and all its Sins throng forth, as if they were awaken'd by the ſurprizing Summons, *Ariſe ye Dead, and come to Judgment.*

We have a very remarkable Inſtance of this ſudden Apprehenſion, this ſurprizing Fear, in the licentious *Herod.* This great wicked Man *fear'd* the Impartial *John the Baptiſt, becauſe he was a juſt Man and an Holy.* But he fear'd him much more, when he had ſacrific'd the Preacher of Righteouſneſs to the imperious Demands of the wanton *Herodias*, and raſhly permitted her to execute Revenge upon him. *When the Fame of the bleſſed Jeſus was ſpread abroad, for the mighty Works that were done by him, and his Diſciples, King Herod heard of him, and he ſaid, that John the Baptiſt was riſen from the Dead, and therefore mighty Works did ſhew forth themſelves in him.* Mark 6.14

Others pleas'd themſelves with uncertain
Mar.6.15. Conjectures concerning him, *ſaying, that it is Elias; or that it is a Prophet, or as one of the Prophets.* But *Herod* could not but make a Concluſion, that fill'd him with Horror. *It is John the Baptiſt whom I beheaded, he is riſen*
—— 16. *from the Dead.*

Though he knew not of any Reſurrection, yet his Guilt told him that he was actually riſen; and he believ'd that he was come to proclaim his own Innocence, and bring Him to an Account for his Injuſtice and Cruelty; and that *therefore mighty Works did ſhew forth*
—— 14. *themſelves in him,* to give Teſtimony to the Integrity of St. *John,* and diſcover the Guilt of the Murtherer.

And we may ſuppoſe, that when *the Vail of*
Matth 27. 51,52,53. *the Temple was rent in twain, from the Top to the Bottom; and the Earth quak'd, and the Rocks rent, and the Graves were open'd, and many Bodies of Saints which ſlept, aroſe, and came out of the Graves, and went into the Holy City, and appear'd unto many,* then *Herod* fear'd greatly, and his Heart was *ſhaken and rent* like the Rocks, and the dark Corners of it *were open'd,* and all his Sins *came forth, and appear'd to him:* and he could not but ſay of St. *John,* as the
Luke 23. 47. Centurion did of the Crucified *Jeſus, Certainly this was a righteous Man!*

How was *the perfect and upright Job* affected with his Sufferings, when God ſeem'd to have forſaken him, and was pleas'd *to try him in the Furnace of Affliction! The Arrows of the*
Job 6. 4. *Almighty* (ſays he) *are within me, the Poyſon whereof*

whereof drinketh up my Spirits: the Terrors of God do ſet themſelves in aray againſt me. Therefore I will not refrain my Mouth, I will ſpeak in the Anguiſh of my Spirit, I will complain in the Bitterneſs of my Soul. Job. 7. 11.

And yet he had this to comfort him, that *he ſuffer'd not for any Iniquity in his Hands, that his Prayer was pure,* that he could ſay with Confidence, *Behold my Witneſs is in Heaven, and my Record is on High.* Job 16. 17, 19.

How much more then muſt the Wicked endure, who are aſſur'd that they have provok'd an Almighty Enemy! *Their Sins teſtify againſt them, their Tranſgreſſions are with them, and as for their Iniquities they know them.* They have ſinn'd preſumptuouſly, and forfeited the Favour of God, and *he has ſet them as a Mark againſt him, ſo that they are a Burden to themſelves. When they lie down, they ſay, when ſhall we ariſe, and the Night be gone, and they are full of toſſings to and fro, to the dawning of the Day. When they ſay, our Bed ſhall comfort us, our Couch ſhall eaſe our complaint, then they are ſcar'd with Dreams, and terrified with Viſions.* Job 7. 20. Job 7. 4. Job 7. 13. 14.

Of this we have experience, whenſoever we have done any ſinful Action. It troubles our Thoughts, and interrupts our Reſt by Night, with a confus'd Conſciouſneſs of Guilt, and a dreadful Expectation of Puniſhment; and before we are entirely awake in the Morning, we find a Clog upon our Spirits; and tho' we cannot diſtinctly remember the Occaſion of it, our Heart tells us, there is a heavy Charge againſt us, which ſtrikes a damp

damp upon the Enjoyments of the following Day; And the upbraiding Remembrance of it ſtill returns, and as often as we look into our Breaſts, our Shame riſes before us.

A guilty Conſcience always caſts up its loathſom Burthen, like thoſe burning Mountains that throw up Fire out of their Bowels, Rev. 14 11 or like the damn'd, *the Smoke of whoſe Torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.*

We ſee the Conſummation of Miſery in the treacherous *Judas*, when he repented of his Falſhood to his Lord, and *brought again* Matth. 27. 9. 4 *the Thirty Pieces of Silver, the Price of him that was valued, to the chief Prieſts and Elders, ſaying, I have ſinn'd, in that I have betray'd the innocent Blood.*

They treated him with the utmoſt Contempt, and ſaid, *What is that to us, ſee thou to that*; and he was alſo deſpis'd by himſelf, and became the Object of his own Hatred and Indignation, *ſo that his Soul choſe Strang-* Job. 7. 15. *ling and Death, rather than his Life.*

And into this reſtleſs State, the Sinner will certainly fall, unleſs he makes haſt to be reconcil'd to God. For all his Arts will be ineffectual, and unable to lull his Conſcience into a laſting Security. The cloſeſt Train of Pleaſures will have ſome Interruption; the loudeſt Noiſe of Mirth will be ſilenc'd by the Cries of Guilt; and tho' he endeavour to *ſtrengthen himſelf in Iniquity*, yet the Number of his Sins will not render him altogether inſenſible of Fear, they will only *heap up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath*, and the

the Evils which he has multiplied againſt himſelf, will one day *find him out.*

When the Hour of Calamity, or Sickneſs comes upon him, the Sins of his Youth will *riſe in Judgment* againſt him, and the black Catalogue of Vices, which he endeavour'd to eraſe or conceal, will appear in plain and indelible Characters: *when he caſts up the Account of his Sins,* he ſhall be ſeiz'd with Fear and Trembling, and *his own Iniquities ſhall convince him to his Face:* his Conſcience will conſtrain him to attend to her Accuſations, and will not permit *the Temples of his Head to take any reſt:* he has no Hopes in this Life, no Proſpect of Happineſs in the other. His preſent Condition is too grievous to be born, and his Expectation is full of Miſery. He has no Stay or Support, no Anchor to hold him faſt, but is driven about, and toſs'd by the Violence of a Tempeſt, which can never be ſtill'd. He can never entertain the leaſt Thoughts of Peace, but is at utter Enmity with his Reaſon, with his Conſcience, with his God.

Wiſ. 4. 20.

Pſ. 132. 4.

And now what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he hath gain'd, when God taketh away his Soul? Terrors take hold on him, as Waters, a Tempeſt ſtealeth him away in the Night. The Eaſt-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a Storm, hurleth him out of his Place. For God caſts upon him, and will not ſpare, he would fain flee out of his Hand: But there is no eſcaping, for horrible is the End of the Unrighteous. Which brings me to conſider,

Job 27. 8.

Job 27. 20, 21, 22.

Wiſ. 3. 19.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Cauſes of their Diſquiet, or *why there can be no Peace to the Wicked.*

And the *Firſt* and plaineſt Cauſe of it, is a natural Senſe of the Baſeneſs and Malignity of Sin. We muſt neceſſarily trace it from this; for it could not ſo generally prevail, were it not eſſential to the Nature of Man, and were there not a real Difference between Good and Evil.

In all Nations and Ages, Fear and Diſquiet have been the inſeparable Companions of Guilt, and no Circumſtances of Life could be a ſufficient Guard againſt them. And God has made us liable to ſuffer the Stings of Conſcience, that the Wicked might not go unpuniſh'd in any State or Condition; and tho' they ſhould ſeem to proſper, yet they might have a ſecret Worm to prey upon and conſume all their Enjoyments.

And this will always be the Caſe, as long as Reaſon has any Authority in the World. For the Mind of Man is endu'd with a Power of diſtinguiſhing between Good and Evil; and it does not form uncertain, arbitrary Notions of Things, but judges by a ſtanding Rule, and cannot eaſily depart from its regular Judgment. When Virtue and Vice preſent themſelves before it, it preſently perceives that the one is repugnant, and the other agreeable to it; and the more it meditates upon them, ſo much the more it confirms its firſt diſlike, and ratifies its juſt

Ap-

Approbation; and it is not in the Power of Fancy or Inclination to reverſe the Sentence. For the Nature of Things is not ſubſervient to a wanton Humour, or to be bent and turn'd by our unreaſonable Deſires.

Hence it is, that the Sinner has ſuch a mighty Conteſt with himſelf, before he can break thro' the Reſtraints that are laid upon him. He cannot but know that he is acting to the Prejudice of his Reaſon, his Reputation, and his Intereſt; and muſt endure many Throes and Agonies, give a terrible Shock to his Nature, and overturn its beautiful Order before he can deſcend to the Commiſſion of a Sin.

And he cannot entirely conquer his Reluctance; for when he complies with the flattering Temptation, he bluſhes at the Thoughts of it, and yields with trembling Knees, and a miſgiving Heart.

And tho' he ſhould imagine for a Time that all is well, when the Uſe of his Reaſon is ſuſpended, and his Senſes are wrapt up in the Enjoyment of ſinful Pleaſures, yet he cannot long enjoy the Deluſion. For nothing that is unnatural can be Laſting; and notwithſtanding all his Endeavours, he muſt return to Himſelf.

And then with what Diſdain does he behold the loathſom Object! With what Reproaches does he accuſe himſelf of Folly! He diſcerns the Baſeneſs and Deformity of Sin; and can hardly bear to remember, (and yet he muſt remember) that he is fallen from the

the Dignity of a rational Creature, and become more contemptible than the Worm that crawleth upon the Ground.

Tho' he labours often to reconcile himſelf to his great Enemy, yet he cannot ſubdue his Averſion, or prevail over his impartial Thoughts; for they will ſometimes exert themſelves, and whenſoever they do, his Sin will be unable to ſtand the Teſt of his ſerious Conſideration.

Reaſon will find ſome ſober Intervals, in which it will call him to an Account, ſome melancholly Hours, in which it will reprove, upbraid, torment him.

The Heathen had this Senſe of Things, to give Teſtimony againſt their ſinful Actions; and as they concluded that Virtue ſhould be choſen, were it conſider'd only as its own Reward; ſo they were fully convinc'd that Vice was to be avoided, were there no other Conſequence of it, but its immediate Puniſhment.

And their fabulous Deſcriptions of a State of Miſery, and of Whips, and Scorpions and Furies, were deriv'd from the real Anguiſh which they felt within themſelves, and from the ſevere Laſhes, the ſharp Stings, the reſtleſs Indignation of their own Minds.

And this Judgment of Sin has univerſally prevail'd, and Virtue recommended it ſelf, by its natural Worth and Excellence, and Vice would have been condemn'd had there been no Law to condemn it.

Another Cauſe of the Diſquiet that attends a ſinful State, is the Expectation of a future Judgment, which had taken root in the Minds of Men, even before God had declar'd unto us, that *he had appointed a Day in which he would judge the World*, and the Perſon that ſhould adminiſter Juſtice in that ſolemn Trial. Acts 17. 31.

For the Privilege of Reaſon, which renders us far more excellent than the inferior Ranks of Creatures, does alſo render us capable of giving an Account of our Actions: And as it was natural to conclude, that we were the Work of an All-wiſe Being; ſo it was reaſonable to expect that he ſhould call us to anſwer for the Diſcharge or Abuſe of our great Truſt.

And every Man has in himſelf a lively Emblem of the Manner of proceeding in the future Examination, and an Earneſt of the Sentence that will be pronounc'd. For we find a Tribunal erected in our Hearts, and a Judge ſitting upon it, and ſummoning all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions to appear before it.

We are brought to this careful Review, tho' our Wills ſtrive againſt it; and we cannot but judge of them according to their different Nature and Qualities, tho' we would fain confound the Diſtinction, and *call Evil, Good, and Good, Evil.*

When we do well, our Conſcience tells us, that *we ſhall be accepted. When we do ill*, it fails not to aſſure us, that *Sin lieth at the Door*; and

and it whiſpers to us, that we ſhould ſtand in awe of this Boſom Witneſs and Judge, be-
Rom. 13. 4. cauſe *it bears not the Sword in vain; that it is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon them that do evil*; and therefore it concerns us to pay a Deference to it, becauſe there is a Higher Court in which we muſt appear, a greater Tribunal, at which we muſt ſtand, to give an Account to a juſt and righteous God.

And this Expectation of a Judgment to come, has frequently check'd the daring Sinner, and interrupted his Mirth and Jollity; and whilſt he has been *walking in the Ways of his Heart, and in the Sight of his Eyes*, he has been troubled with the ill-boding Admoni-
Eccleſ. 11. 9 tion, *Know thou that for all theſe Things God will bring thee into Judgment.* And the bare Poſſibility of it, is enough to confound and diſtract even thoſe that will not believe any more.

Since then, *the Wicked are like a troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt*, and their Diſquiet is the neceſſary Conſequence of Sin: Let us conſider the Folly of embracing it, for the Sake of any Temptation. The Pleaſures that attend it, are Imaginary and Tranſient;
Iſa. 29. 8. *And it is even as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty; or as when a thirſty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his Soul has Appetite.* But the Fear, the Anxiety, the Confuſion, and Remorſe, that immediately follow it, are real and laſting. Can

Can there then be any Advantage or Pleaſure in Sin, that will be a ſufficient Recompence for the Loſs of the Peace of our Minds? Can we be ſo fooliſh as to gratify our vicious Appetites, when within a Moment we ſhall be conſtrain'd to cenſure our paſt Conduct, and reflect upon it with Shame? Were we to gain the higheſt Honours, or the greateſt Riches, yet they could not render us unmindful of our Miſery. All the Arts of the Flatterer, and the loudeſt Applauſe of the Multitude, cannot raiſe the Spirits of the Man that is condemn'd by himſelf. The Weight of Guilt oppreſſes him, and he is dejected and diſmay'd, becauſe he cannot but be conſcious of it.

And his own Endeavours are as ineffectual to relieve him, as thoſe of others. For he ſees thro' the Miſt which he would caſt before his Eyes, and loaths the Abſurdity of his own vain Flattery.

Tho' he tries to hide his Iniquity in the deepeſt Secreſy, yet his *troubled Heart* will *caſt up* its *Mire and Dirt.*

Tho' he ſometimes ſeems to be falling into a little Slumber, yet it only ſerves to heighten his Miſery when he is ſurpriz'd in it, and forc'd to awake: *For there is no Peace (ſaith my God) to the Wicked.* Let him make haſt to eſcape, and fly whitherſoever he will, yet the Storm will reach him, and he cannot ſcreen himſelf from its Violence.

And at the laſt Day, when *the Sea and Death and Hell ſhall give up their Dead,* then Rev. 20. 13.

ſhall all his Iniquity come forth, and the innumerable Multitude of his Sins, ſhall accuſe him before the Dread Tribunal.

And after the terrible Sentence is pronounc'd, he will be caſt into *a Sea of Fire*, where his Body will be tormented with the moſt exquiſite Pains, and his Soul will eternally ſuffer the Vengeance of an injur'd Conſcience, and an offended God.

Pleaſure

ing good in a wonderful manner, above the Power of Nature, neceſſarily affected the People, and inclin'd them to Believe in Chriſt. And we may Juſtly ſuppoſe, that the greater Part of the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, were *almoſt perſwaded to be Chriſtians.* But our Saviour knew the fluctuating and uncertain Paſſions of Men, how ſoon their Zeal is kindled, and how ſoon it languiſhes and *waxes cold*; how ready they are to *receive the word with Joy*, and how ready to be *offended at it if Tribulation or Perſecution ariſeth:* and therefore he would not truſt their temporary Affections, or commit himſelf with an unguarded Confidence to the Multitude of ſeeming Converts, that follow'd him for the ſake of his Miracles. *For he knew all Men, and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of Man; for he knew what was in Man.* A certain Proof that our Saviour was truly God; for who knoweth the Heart of Man but God alone? Mat. 13. 20 21.

The Divinity of Chriſt has been frequently denied; but never with greater Confidence than in this degenerate Age. But I may ſay, with a juſt Deference to the Ancient Champions of our Faith, that it was never better defended, than it has been even in theſe our Days: and *the Time would fail me* ſhould I attempt to give their deſerv'd Praiſes, to thoſe Learned Authors who have abundantly prov'd, that the Son of God is of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, and was not only with him before he

was Born of a Virgin, or *before the World*
Pſ. 90. 2. *was made*, but *was God from Everlaſting*, and to Everlaſting will be God.

Far be it from me, to think it poſſible for me to add any thing to thoſe mighty Arguments, which theſe faithful Advocates have brought to confirm our Belief of his Eternity. But let me *caſt in my Mite*, and with all the heavenly Hoſt, with the Glorious Company of the Apoſtles, with the Noble Army of Martyrs, and with all the Defenders of the True Faith; Let me alſo endeavour to give Honour and Glory to *the Lamb of God*, by proving,

Firſt, That he knew the Hearts of all Men; and therefore,

Secondly, Was endued with a Divine and Infinite Perfection, and conſequently was truly God.

And, *Firſt*, I am to prove that our Saviour knew the Hearts of all Men. *There is a Path* which *no Man knoweth*, and which the moſt diſcerning *Eye* of Fleſh *hath not ſeen. It is hid from the Eyes of all living, and kept cloſe* from the Search of Human Enquiries. But *God underſtandeth the place thereof, for he looketh to the ends of the Earth, and ſeeth*
Job 28. 7. 21. *under the whole Heaven.* It is Deep as *Hell*, and Secret as the *Land of Deſtruction*: But
Job 26. 6. it is *naked to him, to whom Hell is open, and before whom Deſtruction hath no covering.* This unſearch-

unſearchable Myſtery, is the Heart of Man.

Labour and Induſtry can find out *the Vein for Silver, and the Place for Gold*, but it cannot go down into the Depth of our Hearts, or pierce into the Secrets that are hidden there. Job. 28. 1.

The various Images that are form'd by the Imagination; the heaps of Treaſures that are laid up in the Memory; the ſudden fleeting Thoughts that continually paſs through the Mind; the Deſires that ſpring forth; the Purpoſes that are cheriſh'd and entertain'd; and the ſettled Reſolutions that wait for an opportunity of being fulfill'd; all theſe are but imperfectly known to the moſt curious and inquiſitive of the Sons of Men, and are diſcover'd but in part by the moſt exact and watchful Obſervation. Even the Surface of the Heart, is a falſe and flattering Appearance, and when it ſeems to riſe to our view, it is hid from it, by the Mask of Hypocriſy, the ſpecious diſguiſe of artful Profeſſions, and the intricate foldings of Diſſimulation.

The Tongue, that ſerves to communicate its Thoughts; and thoſe appointed Words, that paſs as Meſſengers from one Breaſt to another, are ſeldom true to their Truſt; and oftener tell what it is not, than what it is.

The Knowledge of Mankind, which is Greatly valued, as the beſt Proof of Experience, and an uſeful Improvement of our Talents; even this valuable Knowledge, is founded

founded rather upon our Obſervation of Men's outward Conduct, than a real Judgment of their inward Sentiments. By taking notice of their Habits and Cuſtoms, and the uſual bent and tendency of their Actions, we perhaps conjecture aright concerning their future Practice, and from what they have done, conclude what they will do. But the Springs and Principles of their Actions are ſtill conceal'd, and ſo often vary, that we cannot form a certain Judgment of them.

It is the happineſs of Friends, that they knit their Souls together, and freely and generouſly impart their Thoughts to each other; there is a daily mutual Intercourſe between their Breaſts, and their Joys and Sorrows are ſo equally divided, that they have but one Intereſt, and *rejoyce or ſuffer* together. But tho' they are thus united in their greateſt Concerns, yet a Thouſand and Ten Thouſand Thoughts ariſe in each of them, which the other does not know; for it is impoſſible for one Man to have an abſolute and perfect Knowledge of another. Tho' they ſhould reſolve to break down *the Partition-Wall*, and lay their Hearts in common, without any Fence or Screen to conceal their inmoſt Parts, yet ſtill one difficulty would remain unmovable: For no Man can make himſelf entirely known to another, becauſe no Man knows himſelf.

Jer. 17. 9. *The Heart is deceitful above all things*, even ſo deceitful, that it ſhrinks back, and avoids its

its own View, and deceives it ſelf, and never more deceives it ſelf, than when it is moſt confident of its own Sincerity. We think our Purpoſes are good, and the more we look upon them, ſo much more we approve them, and eſteem them agreeable to Right Reaſon; and yet our Reaſon is biaſs'd by Prejudice that grew inſenſibly upon us; our Affections have brib'd our Thoughts; and our Inclinations, inſtead of being guided by our Judgment, have ſway'd and directed it by their ſecret Influence. Even Conſcience it ſelf, That Domeſtick, That Conſtant, That Faithful Witneſs, is ſubject to Blindneſs, and may be brought to admire a Deluſion. And ſuch is the difference between God and us, that *the darkneſs is no darkneſs to him*, but our *light* it ſelf *is darkneſs*. Man is let only into the *Porch, or outward Courts* of his own Heart; He alone can enter into its *inward Chambers, who is gone into the Holy of Holies, and entred within the Veil.* Pſ. 139. 11

The All-ſeeing Eye of the Son of God ſearches the very bottom of the Heart, and *needs not that any ſhould teſtify of Man*, not even Conſcience it ſelf; for he is a Witneſs and Judge of our Conſcience, and *knows what is in Man*, without any other Teſtimony beſides his own.

He gave ſeveral Proofs and Inſtances of this Knowledge, during the courſe of his Miniſtry upon Earth. When He met the Sincere *Nathanael*, *He ſaw not as Man ſeeth*, nor judg'd according to the outward Appearance,

pearance, but at one comprehenſive View beheld all the ſecret Corners of his Heart, and found it pure from Vanity and Deceit, and fit to be *the Temple of the Holy-Ghoſt*; and having examin'd and tried him to the uttermoſt, He gave him that Juſt and Glorious Character, *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom*
Joh. 1 47. *is no Guile.* A Character that could be given by none, but him that *Knows the Secrets of the Heart.*

His Converſation with *the Woman of Samaria* was a remarkable Proof of this Knowledge. Jeſus having made himſelf ſubject to the innocent Infirmities of Human Nature, was *wearied with his Journey*, and therefore *ſate down on Jacob's Well* to refreſh himſelf; *and there came a Woman to draw Water.* I ſhall not here inſiſt upon his Improvement of this Opportunity, by deſiring her to *give him to drink*, and offering to *give her living Water*, that ſhe might *never Thirſt*; But paſſing over that excellent Part of his Diſcourſe, we may obſerve at length, that he bids her *go, call her Husband*, and the Woman endeavours to evade his Command by ſaying, *I have no Husband*; and he turns that evaſive Anſwer into an Accuſation againſt her. *Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no Husband; For thou haſt had five Husbands, and he whom thou now haſt is not thy Husband: in that ſaidſt thou truly.* Conſidering the Prejudices between the Jews and Samaritans, we have Reaſon to believe, that in his Human Capacity He was an entire Stranger to the

the Life and Conduct of this Woman. He dwelt amongſt the *Jews*, *who had no dealings with the Samaritans*; and till this Accidental (ſhall I call it?) or Providential Meeting, had no Opportunity of enquiring into her State and Condition. But as the Son of God, He was Witneſs to all the Circumſtances of Her Life, and ſurpriz'd her with a true Relation, and particular Account of it. And Her reaſoning upon it was an Acknowledgment of his Divine Attribute. *The Woman ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh, which is call'd Chriſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things.* By theſe words ſhe not only declares, what Jeſus was, but what ſhe expected the Meſſias would be: And purſuant to this Conviction, when *ſhe went her way into the City; ſhe ſaid to the Men, come ſee a Man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Chriſt?* It is impoſſible to conſider this part of the ſacred Hiſtory aright, without concluding, that he was the Chriſt, and that the Chriſt was the All-Knowing God. John 4.

His Behaviour in the Caſe of *the Woman taken in Adultery, in the very Fact*, tho' it does not ſo directly prove, yet it ſeems to be another Proof of his ſearching Knowledge: The Woman's Crime was undeniable, the Accuſation certain, and the Legal Penalty was Death. But this equitable, compaſſionate Judge, appear'd at firſt regardleſs of the Complaint: And when her Accuſers importunately extorted a Sentence from

from him, *He ſaid unto them, he that is without Sin among you, Let him firſt caſt a Stone at her.* Whatſoever Crimes the Men were guilty of, the Knowledge of them was lodg'd in their own Breaſt, and open to none, but themſelves and God: But we may conclude, that this *Searcher of the Heart*, went down with them into the Bottom of it, and poſſeſs'd them with ſo Strong and Lively a Senſe of their Wickedneſs, that they could not withſtand the Charge that they brought againſt themſelves, and being Self-condemn'd, could no longer urge the Condemnation of another: *Being convicted by their own Conſcience, they went out one by one, beginning at the Eldeſt even unto the Laſt; and Jeſus was left alone, and the Woman ſtanding in the midſt.* Happy was the Woman, in that ſhe eſcap'd the rigid and unmerciful Judgment of Men, and was left to the Infinitely merciful Judgment of God! May the Words of our Saviour dwell for ever in our Hearts, and reſtrain us from paſſing harſh and uncharitable Cenſures on each other. *When Jeſus liſt up himſelf, and ſaw none but the Woman, He ſaid unto her, Woman where are thoſe thine Accuſers? Hath no Man condemn'd thee? ſhe*
Joh. 8. *ſaid, No Man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: Go, and Sin no more.*

His Prediction of St. *Peter*'s Denying him, is another Proof that he knew the Heart of Man. This zealous Apoſtle had always been moſt ready to make an open Profeſſion of his Faith, and ſeem'd the moſt reſolute to

to defend it; and when his Lord and Maſter ſaid unto the Diſciples, *All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this Night*; He could not bear the Imputation of Treachery or Cowardice, but frankly declar'd, that *tho' all Men ſhould be offended becauſe of him, yet he would never be offended.* And when our Saviour doubled the Charge againſt him, telling him, he would not only Forſake him and fly, but proceed even to the Denial of him; and not only *deny* him upon a Surprize, but perſiſt in his Denial and repeat it *Thrice*; *the fire kindled* in the Apoſtle, and he ſpake more boldly with his Tongue, *tho' I Die with thee, yet will I not Deny thee:* and had the *Thoughts* of Chriſt been *as our Thoughts*, he muſt then have believ'd that he would follow him *into Priſon, and unto Death.* But notwithſtanding theſe confident Declarations, he knew that he would Deny him; and he could not know this without diſcerning the Frailty of St. *Peter*'s Reſolutions; the Intention of the Devil to make an Aſſault upon him; and the All-wiſe Purpoſe of God to permit him to fall: for we muſt ſo far vindicate St. *Peter*, as to believe that he did not intend to Deny his Maſter, but was firmly perſwaded of his own Sincerity, tho' deceiv'd by that Perſwaſion. The Teſtimony that he gave of himſelf, was not wilfully falſe, but imperfect and uncertain. But our Saviour needed not his Teſtimony, *for he knew what was in Man*; and he was alſo acquainted with the malicious Artifices of *Mat.* 26.

of the Devil, and all *the depths* of his Iniquity; and therefore he ſaid, *Simon, Simon, Behold Satan hath a deſire to have you, that he may ſift you as Wheat.* But tho' he foreſaw the intended Temptation, yet he could not have foreſeen St. *Peter*'s Compliance, without knowing alſo the Will of God, by whoſe Permiſſion he fell: and St. *Peter* might Juſtly have ſaid; *Lord thou knoweſt all things,* even the Heart of Man; *ſuch Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.* Neither the Height nor Depth is hid from thee; *If I climb up into Heaven thou art there, if I go down to Hell, thou art there alſo.*

Pſ. 139.

His Knowledge of the Heart of Man may be abundantly prov'd, from his Foreknowledge of the future Diſpoſitions and Inclinations of his Followers: *for Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believ'd not, and who ſhould betray him.*

John 6. 64.

Let it not be objected, that he was miſtaken in his Choice of a Diſciple; Let not that ſeemingly erroneous Choice, be alledg'd as a Token of his Ignorance; for his Infinite Wiſdom intended to confirm the Faith of the reſt, by the Treachery and Infidelity of *Judas*; and he foretold his fatal Revolt, long before it came to paſs; ſaying, *have not I choſen you Twelve, and one of you is a Devil?*

V. 70.

And even this baſe Apoſtate proclaim'd the Innocence and Honour of his Lord, tho' in a manner very different from the other Diſciples: for even when he had ſold him into

into the Hands of his Enemies, and deliver'd him up *for Thirty Pieces of Silver*, yet no corrupt Temptation could prevail with him, to fix an Accuſation upon him: he was ſo far from bearing Witneſs againſt him, for the ſake of a Reward, that he brought again the Price of his Iniquity, acknowledging that *he had Sinned in betraying the Innocent Blood*; and haſten'd to Perdition, by executing Vengeance upon himſelf.

The Apoſtles were convinc'd by our Saviour's arguing, that his Knowledge was Infinite, and made this publick Declaration of it, *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all Things.* And when he ſeem'd to Queſtion the Sincerity of *Peter*'s Love, and tried him to the utmoſt by repeated Enquiries; the faithful Diſciple gave this final Anſwer to them, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee.*

Joh. 16. 30

Joh. 21. 17

And this was the Opinion of them all, for when they were aſſembled to chooſe an Apoſtle into the room of the Traytor *Judas*, and had appointed Two Candidates for that ſacred Office, deſiring the Divine Direction in the Choice of one of them, they thus addreſs'd themſelves to him *that purchas'd a Church with his Blood*; *Thou, Lord, which knoweſt the Hearts of all Men, ſhew whether of theſe two thou haſt choſen.*

Acts 1. 24.

And they gave not greater Honour to the Son of God, than he claim'd and aſcrib'd to himſelf; *I am He* (ſaith the Lord Jeſus) *which ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts: and I*

Rev. 2. 23.

Rev. 2. 23. *will give to every one according to his Works.* Which brings to our Remembrance, yet ſtronger Proofs of his all-ſeeing Knowledge; namely his Making and Judging the World.

It is expreſsly affirm'd by St. *John*, that Joh. 1 3. *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*; and by the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, that *God made the Worlds by his Son, who ſtill* Heb. 1. 2, 3. *upholds all things by the word of his Power.*

And even thoſe perverſe, unreaſonable Men, that have preſum'd to ſay, that the Son of God was a Creature, cannot preſume to ſay, that he was not the Creator. Amongſt the numberleſs Works of his Hands, he diſtinguiſh'd Man with a particular Regard; and the whole Trinity vouchſafe to repreſent themſelves, as conſulting together at the Creation of that Once noble Creature: Nor did the ever-bleſſed Jeſus only contrive and form the outward Structure of Man's Body, or *cloath him with Skin and Fleſh, and fence him with Bones and Sinews*; but he alſo gave him a Living Soul, and endued him with Reaſon, that Beautiful Image and Likeneſs of his Maker. And if he knows whereof we were made, as to our outward Part, does he not alſo know the inward Corners of the Heart, the Habitation that he built for himſelf?

When the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the infinite Knowledge of God, which was a Witneſs to all his Thoughts, Words and Actions; he brings this certain Proof of it, *Thou haſt faſhion'd me behind*

hind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me. Pſ. 139. 5.

And he reaſons upon another Occaſion in this forcible concluſive Manner: *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear? he that formed the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? he that teacheth Man Knowledge, ſhall not he know?* Pſ. 94. 9, 10.

The Potter had power over the Clay, to make one Veſſel to greater Honour than another; and as he form'd our ſeveral Capacities, and gave them a different Extent; ſo he exactly knows their Meaſure, and cannot but remember how wide or narrow they were, when they came forth from his Hand. He has a perfect and adequate View of the Compaſs of our Underſtanding, and *ſeeth a far off* the infinite Variety of Thoughts, that are only likely to riſe in our Breaſt. He ſet a Mark upon them according to his Pleaſure, and they were *turn'd as Clay to the Seal*; and he adapted proper Objects to them, and ſuited our Thoughts to the many various Occaſions that might excite them. He fram'd the Scene of our Imagination, and drew the Lines of thoſe Images, that continually ariſe upon it. He built the Storehouſe of our Memory, and founded the Order in which its Treaſures are diſtinctly rang'd and preſerv'd, and we cannot conceive a more injurious Notion of God our Creator, than the Impious Suppoſition that he has forgotten his own Workmanſhip, and is ignorant of the Purpoſes for which it was ordain'd. But if we allow that he diſcerns the Heart of Man, we Rom. 9 21.

Heb. 4.13. must also allow that *all things are naked and open to him*; for Man's Heart can be known by him alone, who knoweth all things.

The other Works of the Creation act by necessity of Nature; and *God has given them a Law which cannot be broken.* And therefore certainly Knowing what they must do, he certainly knows what they have done: But Man is a free Agent, *left in the hands of his own Counsel*, and at perfect Liberty to choose or refuse whatsoever pleases or offends him: And if the Blessed Jesus, as Creator of the World, is acquainted with the Purposes of Mankind, and the execution of them, how frail and dubious soever they are; there is *no Knowledge too excellent for him*, no Mystery so difficult that he *cannot attain unto it.* It is also absolutely necessary, that he should throughly know the Heart of Man, because he is appointed *Judge of the World. The Word of God is a discerner*

Heb. 4.12, 13. *of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart; neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight: but all things are naked and open unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do. Whatsoever doth make manifest is Light*; and he which shall make all things manifest *is the Light it self, the Brightness of the Divine Glory, and the express Image of his Heavenly Father. He is ordain'd the Judge of the Quick and Dead*, because *he was touch'd with the*

Heb. 4. 15. 5. 2 *feeling of our Infirmities, and can have Compassion on the Ignorant, and on them that are out of the Way, for that He himself also was com-*

compaſs'd with Infirmity. But this tender compaſſionate Senſe of our Weakneſs and Frailty would give a partial Biaſs to his Judgment, and have too much Influence upon his final Determinations, were he not endued with infinite Knowledge to try and examine our Caſe, and take a full and exact Survey of all its Circumſtances.

How large and extenſive is the View of that All-ſeeing Eye, that ſhall Look down from *the Circle of the Heavens*, and behold at once the People of every Age, and Nation, and number *that exceeding great Army which ſhall ariſe and ſtand before the Judgment-Seat!* Ezek. 37. 10.

How piercing and deep is that Knowledge, which will diſcover the Springs and Principles of all the Actions of Men; Search into every Thought of their Breaſts, and unfold the ambiguous Words of every Double Tongue!

Hard would be the Task of the moſt ſubtle and diſcerning Man, were he to ſet by and watch over his Brother, to attend him with the cloſeſt Obſervation, and look into his Soul with the quickeſt Sagacity. Hard, and indeed Impoſſible would it be, to paſs an exact unerring Judgment upon him, and to give a faithful Account, of the Bent and Motion of his Heart; of every Thought that entred into it; of every Action that proceeded from it, and of every Word that fell from his Tongue. Notwithſtanding the ſtricteſt Caution, and the moſt diligent and tenacious Remembrance, many of the

Actions that are done but in one Day would escape our Observation, or slide out of our Memory; and there is hardly one of a Thousand, that can make up his Account, even for so short a Time, without forgetting many Branches of it, and leaving a confus'd Sum of secret Sins. It would be harder yet to recollect the Passages and Accidents of any one Season or Stage of Life; and a much greater Difficulty, to bring to remembrance the several Transactions of one Generation; or to compile the History of one Age, tho' the minutest Parts of it were faithfully recorded. How then shall we measure the Compass of that Knowledge, which will bring all the Ages of the World into its comprehensive Sphere, command the Land of Darkness and Forgetfulness, *to give up* the secret Actions of People, whose Names and Places are no more, restore the Records that have been entirely defac'd, and divulge the Thoughts that were never noted down in the Book of Man's Remembrance.

The Judgment of the Son of God, will not determine our future State, till it has consider'd the Purity of our good Intentions, and the Corruption of our evil ones, the Surprize and Inadvertency that will extenuate, and the deliberate Counsel that will aggravate our Faults, the sudden Disorders of Passion, and the slow but surely working Poyson of Malice, the faint Wishes and strong Desires, the frail and ineffectual Purposes, and the settled prevailing Resolutions

lutions of our Minds, the growing Diſpoſitions, and the mature Habits, the ſingle Actions, and the continued Cuſtoms of Vice and Virtue, our falſe Profeſſions, and our ſincere Promiſes, our fair Appearances, and our genuine Fruits of Repentance, our frank and open, and our reſerved and hidden Thoughts, our light and careleſs Speech, and the Lurking Canker of our Bitter Words, the ſilent Whiſpers of our Conſcience, and the friendly Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and our Diſobedience or Compliance with them. It will draw forth our favorite Vices from the dark Corners that Cover'd and Cheriſh'd them, take off that treacherouſly-beautiful Show which deluded the World, and even our own Souls, and expoſe them to Shame in their undiſguis'd natural Deformity. And it will ſeparate our virtuous Actions from the earthly Mixture that cleaves to them; and having weighed them in the Balance together, with his all-ſufficient Merits, it will value them as if they had always been unmix'd *as the fine Gold.* The Wicked will be diſmay'd and confounded at the Thoughts of this Infinite Knowledge, and ſhall ſay in vain *to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and Hide us from the Face of him that ſits on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.* Rev. 6. 16.

But the Righteous ſhall rejoyce, that the compaſſionate Jeſus was their Witneſs, and ſhall go forth to meet him with a chearful Hope, *that he will make their Innocence ſhine*

forth as the Light, and their Just-dealing as the Noon-day.

Having sufficiently prov'd, that our Saviour Knew the Hearts of all Men, I proceed,

Secondly, To shew, that he was endued with a Divine and Infinite Perfection, and consequently was truly God.

The Knowledge of Man's Heart is frequently mention'd in the sacred Writings, as a peculiar Attribute, and distinguishing
1 Sam. 2. 3 Character of God. *The Lord is a God of Knowledge. He Giveth Wisdom unto the Wise, and Knowledge to them that know Understand-*
Dan. 2. 21, *ing. He revealeth the deep and secret things;*
22. *he knoweth what is in the Darkness; and the Light dwelleth with him.* When he has declar'd, that *the Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can Know it?* Intimating, that it is not in the Power of Man to look into the Bottom of the Heart, He claims and ascribes the Knowledge of it to himself, *I the Lord search the Heart and try the Reins*; which certainly implies, that none but God can do it. The Psalmist gives
Ps. 7. 10. him this sacred Character, *the Righteous God trieth the Hearts and Reins:* and the Prophet *Jeremiah* thus makes his Addresses to him; *O Lord of Hosts, that Judgest Righteously, and Triest the Reins and the Heart. His Eyes*
Jer. 11. 20 *are upon the ways of Man, and he seeth all his*
Job 34. 21, *Goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of*
22. *death,*

death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves; for *the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth.*

But I need not inſiſt upon the Proof of the Divine Knowledge: It is certainly an Attribute of God, and as certainly an Attribute of Chriſt; and he claims and aſſerts it in the ſame words, and the very ſame manner, as God himſelf claims and aſſerts it: and therefore he cannot be a Creature, but muſt neceſſarily be equal with God. For I may ſay with a Juſt Deference to the Almighty, that he cannot communicate infinite Knowledge to a Creature; neither can a created Capacity receive it. But were it poſſible that it ſhould receive it, it is not conſiſtent with the Wiſdom or Dignity of God to give it. *He is Jealous of his Honour, and will not give it to another.*

Neither can we ſuppoſe, that our Saviour is endued only with infinite Knowledge, and is not poſſeſs'd of the other Divine Perfections. Whereſoever one is, the other are alſo; there is a Beautiful Harmony, and (If I may ſo expreſs it) a Connexion between them. Far be it from me, to pretend to Speak, without Speaking improperly of God's Perfections: but this I will be bold to ſay, that if our Saviour is infinite in Knowledge (as has been fully prov'd) he is alſo infinite in Wiſdom; for they mutually ſuppoſe each other, and neither could be Perfect and Infinite without the other.

If it ſeem but a ſmall thing unto you that our Sa-

Saviour Knoweth the Hearts of Men, there is yet a stronger Proof of the Excellence of his Knowledge; for *he Knoweth the Mind of God.* He Lay *in the Bosom of his Father* from all Eternity, and was perfectly acquainted with the unsearchable Treasures of his Wisdom and Goodness; and *the great* and awe-
John 1.18. ful *deep of his Judgments. No Man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declar'd him.*
Luk. 10 22. *No Man Knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any Man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* Human Nature is too weak to
Joh. 6.46. bear the Sight of Him; *he which is of God, he alone hath seen the Father. What Man*
1Cor.2.11 *knoweth the things of Man, save the Spirit of a Man which is in him? even so the things of God, knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God*; and *the Spirit of God*, is also the Spirit of Christ. It was impossible that he should be ignorant
John 10. of His Father's Will, since *he and his Father*
30. *are one*, and *in him dwelleth all the fullness of*
Col. 2. 9. *the Godhead. By his Wisdom he founded the Earth; by Understanding he establish'd the Hea-*
Prov.3.19 *vens. By his Knowledge the Depths were bro-*
20. *ken up, and the Clouds drop'd down the Dew*; and he utter'd things which have been kept Secret from the Foundation of the World.

Since therefore the Divine Attributes, which belong only to God, do undoubtedly belong to Christ; Let us first believe him to be the True God, and not only believe, but profess and declare our Belief. It is not enough,

enough, that our inward Sentiments are full of Reverence, and ſincerely devoted to him. It is indeed an unſpeakable Comfort to us, that *he knows the Secrets of our Hearts*, and therefore can diſcern the Sincerity of our Belief. But he alſo requires our outward Profeſſion, and expects that we ſhould honour and glorify his holy Name.

It is of dangerous Conſequence, and a pernicious Example, to Stifle and Suppreſs our Faith. We thereby offend the weak, and confirm the wicked; and by not appearing for our Saviour, we appear againſt him.

Let not any ſlaviſh Fear, or ſordid Views of Intereſt, reſtrain us from making an open Acknowledgment of our Lord:

Let not the Reproach, that is caſt upon his Name, render us aſham'd.

Should the Powers of the World (which God prevent) be combin'd againſt him, Let us ſuffer the worſt that they can do, rather than obey their wicked Commands. Let us remember, that there is one Higher than they, even the Crucified Jeſus, who *is far above all Principality and Power, and every Name that is nam'd, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come.* Eph. 1. 21.

Should the Fathers of the Church be ſo Falſe to their Truſt, ſo Unnatural to their Flock, as to diſcourage our Profeſſion, and even *breath forth Threatnings againſt it*; tho' we retain a Juſt Regard to their Sacred Order, and pay them Obedience in all things Lawful, Let us ſtill retain a higher Regard

to

to the Fountain of their Power, and not affront *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, by an unlawful Obedience to the treacherous Paſtors of his Church.

Let us not diſhonour the Proteſtant Name, by rejecting the Genuine Articles of Faith: and whilſt we Juſtly refuſe to put our Confidence in any pretended Mediators, Let us not Unjuſtly diſallow *the only* true *Mediator between God and Men.*

Secondly, Since our Saviour knoweth what is in Man, Let us order all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, with a conſtant Reſpect to that All-ſeeing Witneſs. Let not any profane, impious Thought receive entertainment in our Breaſt, but let us caſt it from us, with that nobly diſdainful Rebuke, *Get thee behind me Satan.*

Let us *ſet a watch over the door of our Lips*, and ſuffer not our Tongue to offend the Majeſty of our Judge.

And when we are tempted to engage in any Sinful Actions, Let us remember, that our
Pſ. 139. 3. Lord and Maſter *is about our Path, and about our Bed, and ſpieth out all our Ways.* Let us
Pro. 5. 21. not only conſider, that *they are before the Eyes of the Lord, but that he pondereth all our Goings*; and Let us check and reſtrain our ſelves with this Startling Queſtion, *Are not theſe Things noted in thy Book?*

Laſtly, Let us make our Addreſſes to him, with an unſhaken Confidence, and a lively Hope, ſince to him all Hearts are open, all Deſires known, and from him no Secrets are

are hid. We can gueſs but uncertainly at the Extent of that Knowledge which Saints and Angels enjoy: but we are well aſſur'd, that the Knowledge of Chriſt is infinite. He ſees and perceives the Motions of our Heart, and is deeply affected with our earneſt Deſires, *our ſtrong Crying and Tears.* He is throughly acquainted with our Wants and Neceſſities, and will not ſhut his merciful Ears to our Prayers. When *our Spirit is overwhelm'd within us, he knoweth our Path*; and when we *cry out of the depths* to him, he will be *attentive to the voice of our Supplications.* When we are diſtreſs'd and forſaken here Below, Let us remember, that we have a faithful Advocate Above; and when we can hope for nothing upon Earth, Let us lift up our Eyes to that affectionate Friend, that ſecures our Intereſt in Heaven.

And, Let the Fatherleſs and the Widow, when they Groan under the Hand of Oppreſſion, and Bewail their Wrongs with never-ceaſing Tears, Let them not think themſelves entirely deſtitute, but behold through Faith their Prayers aſcending *like Incenſe* to the Throne of God, and preſented *in a Golden Cenſer* to the Divine Acceptance, by the eternal Son of the moſt High.

A

VISITATION SERMON

Preach'd at

Lewes in *Suſſex*,

July 3*d* 1722.

Dan. V. 17.

Then Daniel anſwer'd and ſaid before the King, let thy Gifts be to thy ſelf, and give thy Rewards to another, yet I will read the Writing unto the King, and make known to him the Interpretation.

THE Mightieſt of the Sons of Men are not exempt from the Terrors of Guilt; neither can their Power ſecure them from the avenging Hand of Juſtice,

ſtice; for *Belſhazzar*, King of Babylon, was Surpriz'd by Both *in his Royal Palace*, in the midſt of *Thouſands of his Lords, his Wives and his Concubines.* That he might not long enjoy the Spoils of the Temple, God was pleas'd to declare his Doom, even whilſt he was drinking out of *the Holy Veſſels*; and ſent forth *the Fingers of a Man's Hand to write* the dreadful Tokens of his approaching Deſtruction.

What did the Majeſty of a King now avail, when *his Countenance was chang'd with Fear!* What Comfort did he receive from his outward Happineſs, when *his Thoughts troubled him!* How inſignificant was his Power, when *the Joynts of his Loyns were loos'd, and his Knees ſmote one againſt another!*

To obtain Relief in this needful Time, he ſent for *his Aſtrologers, Magicians, and Soothſayers; and ſaid to the Wiſe-Men of Babylon, whoſoever ſhall read this Writing, and ſhew me the Interpretation thereof, ſhall be cloathed with Scarlet, and have a Chain of Gold about his Neck, and ſhall be the Third Ruler in the Kingdom.*

But the Writing ſurpaſs'd the Learning of all *his Aſtrologers, Magicians, and Sooth-ſayers, and Wiſe-Men*; and *the King was greatly troubled, and his Lords were aſtonied.* And He continued in anxious Suſpenſe, till the Queen recommended to him *Daniel, one of the Children of the Captivity*, a Man in whom there was found *Light and Underſtanding, and excellent Wiſdom.* And the reſtleſs King ſent *Daniel* 5.

for

for him, and repeated the ſame tempting Overtures as he made to the *Chaldeans:* But the faithful Prophet rejected the Bribe with a generous Diſdain; for he wanted no worldly Inducement to incline him to diſcharge his Duty; He regarded not the Riches of *Babylon*, nor could the Power of a King deterr him from executing his important Commiſſion; but without any Hopes of Advantage, or dread of Danger, he was reſolv'd *to read the Writing, and tell him the Interpretation thereof.* He would not alter the Sentence, but deliver'd it home to the King, with its utmoſt Force, and all its Terrors.

The Behaviour of the Prophet upon this extraordinary Occaſion, is a Pattern which ought to be imitated by all the Miniſters of God: for ſince the Divine Laws will ſtand for ever, and *not one Jot or Tittle of them ſhall paſs away*; and ſince the Sanctions, by which they are enforc'd, can never be remov'd: Thoſe that are ſet apart for the Work of the Miniſtry, ſhould interpret and explain the Will of God, in its genuine Senſe, how diſagreeable ſoever to the Luſts of Men; and ſhould never betray their Truſt, through a cowardly Fear, or partial Favour, by ſlackning the Bonds of Duty, or palliating the Heinouſneſs of Sin, or concealing the Danger that ariſes from it. But as they are *Embaſſadors of God*, they ſhould inviolably preſerve his Sacred Authority; and as they deliver his Meſſage to the Sons of Men, they ſhould ſincerely regard the Importance of it,

it, and its near Concernment to their Immortal Souls: And whatſoever Temptations of Intereſt are offer'd to us, by the greateſt Friend, or the moſt powerful Patron, *Let his Gifts be to himſelf, and let him give his Rewards to another:* For,

Firſt, It is our neceſſary Duty to read the Writing, and make known the Interpretation thereof.

Secondly, It is the nobleſt Act of Friendſhip and Charity.

Thirdly, It will obtain Reſpect even from thoſe Unhappy Men who hate the Interpretation.

Fourthly, Though it may provoke them to Injure us for a time, yet it will at length make them Relent and be Sorry for it.

And, *Laſtly*, Their Caſe is then moſt deplorable, when they are depriv'd of thoſe faithful Monitors that dare *tell them the Truth.*

And, *Firſt*, It is our Duty to read the Writing, and make known the Interpretation thereof.

It is indeed every Man's Duty to acquaint himſelf with the Will of God, and impart his Knowledge to his Servants, his Children, his Brother, and his Friend. And he ſhould never ſuffer them to continue in Ignorance or Sin, but impartially give them Inſtructions, Exhortations, or Reproofs, as their Condition requires. But it is moſt

especially the Duty of those that serve at the Altar; and *the Priest's Lips should keep*
Mal. 2.7. *Knowledge, and the People should seek the Law at his Mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

The Necessities of Life engage too great a Part of Mankind in a servile Employment, and they are withdrawn by so many Avocations from the Study of God's Law, that it is necessary there should be an Order of Men, who should make it their peculiar Care to learn the Original Language of the Holy Scriptures, and the Uncorrupted Sense of the Earliest Ages, to examine the Tenure by which we hold our Christian Charter, and to consider the various Objections that have from Time to Time been made against it. And as they are Educated in *the Schools of the Prophets*, and disengag'd from the perplexing Affairs of this Life, they have better Opportunities of knowing the Certainty and Importance of the Christian Doctrines, and can deliver them with the greater Force to the People committed to their Charge.

And besides and beyond all this, They may justly expect the especial Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit, since it is conferr'd upon them *by Laying on of Hands*; and they are Commission'd to Preach *the Words of Life*, by those venerable Fathers whom God Himself has appointed to be the Pastors, the Guardians, and even *the Angels of his Church*.

I know, indeed, that their Commiſſion is ſo far from being regarded, that it is continually ridicul'd by the ſcurrilous Tongues and Pens of thoſe Impious Wretches, who delight in Reviling them under the diſtinguiſhing Title of *Embaſſadors of God.*

But unleſs we renounce our Reaſon, we muſt allow the Divine Authority of their Commiſſion. For its Character is too plain to be denied, and *is written as it were with a Sun-beam* in the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Even under the Law the Prieſts were appointed by God, and *called to* their ſacred Office by a Voice from Heaven; and certainly under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, *no Man* juſtly *taketh this Honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* Heb. 5.4.

The Ever-Bleſſed Jeſus, who is God of God, and Light of Light, very God of very God, was ſent down from Heaven by his Eternal Father, to reconcile rebellious Men to Himſelf: and before he return'd to *the High and Holy Place,* he ordain'd his Miniſters to *Pray them in his ſtead, to be reconcil'd to God. As the Father had ſent him, ſo ſent he them,* and gave them Power and Efficacy by thoſe mighty Words, *Receive ye the Holy-Ghoſt.* 2 Cor. 5.20 Joh. 20 21 22.

Being thus Commiſſion'd by Him, *in whom was all Authority and Power,* they Ordain'd others to ſucceed them in the Office of Paſtors, and to communicate the ſame Authority to others, for the continual Benefit of Chriſt's Church.

And the Orders of Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons, were inviolably maintain'd, and deliver'd down by an uninterrupted Succeſſion.

This Succeſſion has alſo been ſpoken of with Contempt, as a confus'd and intricate Matter, and impoſſible to be prov'd; But thoſe that do not lean too much to their own Underſtandings, nor pretend to be Wiſer than all the Generations that were before them, may ſoon be convinc'd, that it is as eaſily known, and as clearly prov'd, as any other Part of Hiſtory.

But, How much ſoever the Enemies of our Faith, or the Enemies of our Holy Order may vilify and depreciate the Authority of the Miniſters of God, yet They themſelves do more effectually injure it, unleſs they diſcharge their Commiſſion in its utmoſt Extent, and reſolutely declare *the whole Truth of God.* They are bound, by the ſtricteſt Obligations, to cleave to it: for in the Place of God's Preſence, in the midſt of his Congregation, under the watchful Obſervation of the Holy Angels, and even before that unerring Witneſs, who made *the Seeing Eye, and the Hearing Ear*; they promis'd and engag'd to *feed their Flock with the ſincere Milk of the Word,* and to diſpenſe it to them pure and untainted, as it came down from Heaven.

Great would be the Preſumption of any Miniſter, that ſhould neglect the Commands of his Earthly Prince, and act at his own Diſcretion,

cretion, and after his Boundleſs Will, when he had receiv'd particular Inſtructions from him, and knew the certain Rule and Meaſure of his Proceedings: And much Greater is the Preſumption of thoſe Abandon'd Miniſters, that are Falſe to the Truſt which they receiv'd from *the King of Kings*, and are *not afraid to Lie even to the Holy-Ghoſt*, and make an unfaithful Interpretation of the Goſpel, whilſt *the Spirit of Truth* diſcerns their treacherous Prevarication. *Acts* 5. 3.

Nor are they only Unjuſt to God, but Barbarous and Unnatural to the Souls of Men: for the Unlearned and Ignorant put their entire Confidence in them, and depend upon their Direction in the way to Life and Happineſs. How then can they lead them into dangerous Paths, and betray them into *the way that goes down to Hell?* They come to them that they may *give them Heavenly Meat in due Seaſon; and what they give them, they gather; when they open their Mouth*, they hope to be *filled with Good.* It muſt therefore be an Inſtance of the moſt inhuman Cruelty to deceive their juſt Hopes, and abuſe their earneſt Expectations.

To poiſon the Fountains where the Flocks are to refreſh themſelves at Noon; and direct the Traveller, at the approach of Night, to a fatal Precipice, or a treacherous Quickſand; Theſe are ſuch Brutiſh Practices as Nature abhorrs: But yet it is infinitely more Brutiſh, more Shocking to Nature, to lead miſtaken Souls into Perdi-

tion; and turn their neceſſary Inſtruction into a Fatal Deluſion. *If the Light* that they give them *be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs!*

Is it the part of *the Fathers of our Fleſh, to give their Children a Stone inſtead of Bread, or a Serpent inſtead of a Fiſh?* It is Leſs the part of our Spiritual Fathers, to deceive the People, while they pretend to guide them; and to cheriſh their Sins, while they ſhould nouriſh and ſtrengthen their Virtues.

It is a ſtrange Abuſe of Chriſtian Moderation, and a falſe and pernicious Shew of Charity, to indulge the Humours of vicious Men; to ſoften Religion into a Compliance with them, and model it after their own Frame. It is Lawful, indeed, in indifferent Matters, to yield a little for the ſake of Peace, and to *become all Things to all Men*; but the Articles of our Faith, and the principal Duties of Life are not indifferent Matters; we may *contend earneſtly* for theſe, without loſing our Chriſtian Temper, and ſurely we may be *Zealous*, when *our Zeal is for God, and according to Knowledge.*

And tho' the Multitude of Sinners are fond of Flattery, and ſeek after Teachers that will *cry Peace, Peace*, yet what does it avail them, to encourage their groundleſs Hopes, to conceal thoſe Truths that will ſoon work their Conviction, or to cloſe their Eyes in the ſleep of Sin, ſince they muſt quickly *open them in Flames.* Did *Ahab* eſcape the *Arrow*, that was *ſhot at a venture*,

ture, becauſe *the falſe Prophets bid him go and* 1 *Kings* 22.
proſper? Was he therefore ſafe, becauſe he would n ot be admoniſh'd of his Danger?

If *Daniel* had pleas'd *Belſhazzar* with an unfaithful Account of the Writing; if he had perſwaded him to continue his impious Feaſt, and *Eat, Drink, and be Merry*, Would the Hand that Wrote, have forbore to Puniſh him? Would he not have been *ſlain that very Night?* Would not *the Writing* have explain'd it ſelf before the Morning?

How widely ſoever the Articles of our Religion may be made to differ from their original Senſe; how broad ſoever the Path to Heaven may be repreſented; tho' the Obligations to Virtue may be deſcrib'd as unneceſſary, as indifferent, or even as nothing; tho' the Penalties of Vice may ſeemingly be taken away, and eternal Puniſhments be changed into temporal; to abate the Fears, or gratify the Deſires of the Wicked; yet the Articles are ſtill the ſame, and *the way* to Heaven as *narrow*; the Obligations to Virtue cannot be diſſolv'd; the Penalties of Vice cannot be remov'd; nor Eternity be turn'd into the fleeting Moments of Time; but thoſe miſerable Creatures, that lie under the Sentence of Damnation, will find their Puniſhment as unchangable as God, *who is the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever.* How wretchedly then are they deceiv'd, who poſſeſs themſelves with other Thoughts of theſe things? How Guilty are they, who confirm them in thoſe treacherous Thoughts?

It may perhaps be ſaid, and it has been often ſaid, that it is Uncharitable to preſcribe an abſolute Meaſure to other Men's Faith, and denounce Damnation againſt them, unleſs they come up to that Meaſure. But the Miniſters of Chriſt, do not preſcribe it, neither do they paſs the Sentence; they only require them to believe the Doctrines of our Saviour; and they declare the Sentence which the Lover of Souls pronounc'd; and it is not contrary to Charity, but a Token of that excellent Virtue, to teach as he taught, and to declare the Sentence which he pronounc'd. I will preſume to ſay, that they do not *curſe thoſe whom God has not curs'd, neither ſhould they bleſs them whom God has not bleſs'd.* But always remember the Anſwer of *Balaam, if Balak would give me his Houſe full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord my God, to do leſs or more.*

Num. 22. 18.

A juſt Repreſentation of the Caſe, whether it be pleaſing or diſpleaſing to Men, is the only juſt Diſcharge of their Duty to God: and though the Writing may contradict the Sins of their Boſom, and may contain thoſe Threatnings which they are afraid to hear; Yet,

Secondly, It is the nobleſt Act of Friendſhip and Charity, *to read the Writing, and make known the Interpretation thereof.*

When Hilkiah the Prieſt had found a Book of the Law of the Lord given by *Moſes*; the Good

Good *Joſiah* immediately *ſent to enquire after it*, that he might diſtinctly know the Breaches of the Covenant; and the heavy Curſes that hung over *Jeruſalem*: and as ſoon as *the tender Heart* of the King was affected with a ſenſe of the common Guilt and Danger, his Compaſſion to his Sinful wretched People would not ſuffer him to reſt, till *he had read in the Ears of all the Men of Judah, and Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, all the Words of the Book of the Covenant.* 2 *King.* 23. 1. 2.

And the ſame friendly Compaſſion ſhould move every One of us, and eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt, when we conſider the Ignorance and Wickedneſs of Mankind, and behold our Brethren Sleeping on the very brink of Deſtruction.

The affectionate Jeſus has plac'd his Miniſters as Watch-men to obſerve the Dangers of his Flock, and ſound the Alarm when the Enemy is ſtealing in upon it.

The Children of Men are liable to be mis-led, and ſwerve from the Right way, amidſt the various and uncertain Paths of Life: their imperfect Underſtandings give but a feeble glimmering Twilight to guide them, and are eaſily cover'd with Darkneſs. Falſe Appearances deceive them, and a tempting Proſpect dazles the Eye of the moſt diſcerning Judgment: and when they are once deceiv'd, the Paſſions that promoted the Deluſion, ſerve to continue it; and either urge them on apace towards their eternal Ruin, or lull them into a careleſs Security,

Security, while their Danger ſwiftly approaches.

And thoſe unhappy Souls, that are engag'd in a Courſe of Sin, do no longer judge for themſelves, but receive the flattering Reports of their Enemies that compaſs them about. Theſe ſeem to be their only Friends, and conſtantly over-rule the Exhortations to Religion, and the Warnings of their Danger. And they that preſume to offer their friendly Advice are rejected with Scorn and Indignation, as coming at an improper Time, and *an inconvenient Seaſon.*

When they are paſs'd into this deplorable State, the faithful Miniſters are ſent by God, like *Ananias to Saul, to pull off the Scales from their Eyes*, and reſtore them to their Sight; or rather like *Angels, to make a Light ſhine in their Priſon, and looſe the Bands of their Sins.*

It is indeed a difficult Office, but the more difficult, ſo much greater is the Friendſhip, ſo much the nobler the Charity. They lie at the Gates of Hell, and almoſt within view of its Flames, without perceiving them; as Men are often obſerv'd to be held in the deepeſt Sleep, when the Fire gathers Strength, and is juſt ready to ſeize and devour them, and it is neceſſary to uſe Violence to pluck them from an Eternal, as well as a Temporal Fire.

The Depth of their Sin reſembles thoſe dreadful Diſeaſes, that render the Patients inſenſible; and in both Caſes, the ſharpeſt

Methods

Methods are requiſite, to ſtir up and awaken the Senſes, and even force them back into Life.

What a glorious Office is it, to *turn a Sinner from the Error of his Way, and ſave a Soul from Death!* It is not only a Deliverance from Guilt and Miſery, but it amounts to the beſt of Gifts, the Gift of eternal Life: for they that reſcue the Wicked from Deſtruction, do, by God's Aſſiſtance, alſo raiſe them to Heaven.

And this faithful Diſcharge of their Duty will,

Thirdly, Obtain Reſpect, even from thoſe unhappy Men that hate the Interpretation.

They cannot but be conſcious of the Shamefulneſs of Sin; and therefore they are unable to bear that impartial Dealing, which takes off the Veil, and ſhews them to themſelves: yet corrupt as they are, they are conſtrain'd to approve of this Integrity. They fly from it as they alſo would from *an Angel of Light*, or from the Purity and Holineſs of the Divine Nature, even tho' its Juſtice and Power were hid from their View. But they cannot with-hold their inward Eſteem, tho' they endeavour to conceal it by their outward Conduct.

Ahab hated Elijah, becauſe he told him the Truth; but he alſo ſtood in Awe of him; for the Sincerity of the Prophet could not be controul'd by the Power of the King. And

Herod

Herod fear'd St. John, becauſe he acquainted him with his Guilt: and tho' his bold Rebukes interfer'd with the Sin of his Boſom, and croſs'd his prevailing Inclination, yet he often heard his plain and diſ-intereſted Preaching; and ſuch was the Influence of his unſhaken Honeſty, that *he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

Mar.6.20.

And tho' our open, ingenuous Behaviour may provoke Wicked Men to Injure us for a time, yet it,

Fourthly, Will at length make them relent and be ſorry for it.

There needs no other Proof of this Aſſertion, than *Herod*'s Concern for *John the Baptiſt*. He had long continued an Obſtacle to his Sin, and *ſtood* like *an Angel of the Lord, with a Sword drawn in the way*, to oppoſe his Progreſs in Wickedneſs: but at length the King, by a raſh inconſiderate Promiſe, confirm'd by a preſumptuous Oath, Gave the Daughter of *Herodias* an unforeſeen Opportunity of removing the troubleſome Preacher, and putting him to ſilence by ſudden Death; but when the Demand was made, *he was exceeding ſorry*; tho' *it was his Birth-Day, a Day of* Great Rejoycing, and tho' he was indulging Himſelf in the Enjoyment of it, amidſt *his Lords, High-Captains, and chief Eſtates of Galilee*, yet his Heart was griev'd at the thought of executing his ſuppos'd Enemy, but his real and only Friend.

Mar.6.21.

Con-

Conſtancy and Fidelity have a mighty force in obtaining the Love of Mankind; and this may be illuſtrated by the Caſe of *Daniel*. When the envious Princes had procur'd a Decree from the unwary *Darius*, That *no Petition ſhould be offer'd for Thirty Days to any God or Man, but to him alone*; And the flattering Appearance of Loyalty, had render'd him inſenſible of the lurking Malice of the Deſign; *Daniel* perſiſted, as before, in doing his Duty to God, and without regarding the Edict, *Prayed Three times a Day to the King of Heaven, as he did aforetime. Then theſe Men aſſembled and found Daniel Praying*, and *making Supplication before his God*; and immediately prepar'd their Information againſt him, that he might ſuffer the dreadful Penalty of being *caſt into the Den of Lions*. When *Darius* heard the Accuſation, he could not but acknowledge, that the Decree was paſt, that *Daniel* had diſobey'd it, and that he could not reverſe the Law, or prevent the Puniſhment. But ſo highly did he value the Innocence of *Daniel*, that *he was ſore diſpleas'd with himſelf, and ſet his Heart on him to deliver him: and he labour'd till the going down of the Sun to deliver him*: But he could not reſcue himſelf from the ſtrait into which he was brought, or avoid inflicting the Penalty; therefore *he went to his Palace and paſs'd the Night Faſting; neither were Inſtruments of Muſick brought before him; and his Sleep went from him*, and ſo reſtleſs was his Concern for him, that *he aroſe early in the Morning*,

Morning, and went in haſte to the Den of Lions, fearing the Deſtruction of *Daniel*; but yet willing to *hope, that the God whom he ſerv'd continually, had deliver'd him.* And when the Event anſwered his Hopes, *he was exceeding Glad*, and gave up the Adverſaries of the Prophet, to ſuffer in his ſtead. So let the faithful Servants of God for ever eſcape the Evil that is maliciouſly prepar'd for them: and *ſo let all thine Enemies periſh, O Lord.*

Dan. 6.

Judg. 5. 31

I proceed, *Laſtly*, To ſhew that the Caſe of wicked Men is then moſt deplorable, when they are depriv'd of thoſe faithful Monitors that dare tell them the Truth. They are then left to themſelves, and abandon'd and conſign'd over to the moſt pernicious Counſels. *They ſee no tokens* of Goodneſs, *there is not one Prophet more* to awaken them out of the Sleep of Sin, *Neither is there one among them that underſtandeth any more*: they have no Friend to adviſe them, or reſtore their infatuated Minds to a juſt ſenſe of Things: And when the Miniſters of God's Word are driven from their Preſence, it is alſo to be fear'd that *the miniſtring Spirits*, and even *the Holy-Ghoſt*, will depart from them.

We may behold their wretched Condition, in the State of *Saul*, when he had loſt the divine Favour *by Rebellion, which is as the Sin of Witchcraft.* His Friend *Samuel* left him, *and came no more to ſee him, till the Day of his Death; nevertheleſs he mourn'd for him.*

1 Sam. 15. 35.

Being

Being thus abandon'd he *fell from one Wickedneſs to another*, till he was forc'd to fly to an evil Spirit for Comfort; and labour'd by Enchantments to *bring up Samuel from the Dead:* but his impious endeavour, inſtead of relieving him, procur'd a Prediction more dreadful than even *the Hand-Writing upon the Wall: To morrow Thou and thy Sons ſhall be with me.* 1 Sam. 28. 19.

That we may never fall into this miſerable State; let us that wait at the Altar, daily *read the ſacred Writings*, and juſtly *interpret the Word of God*; and let us beſeech thoſe that hear us, duly to regard the Interpretation, as they tender the Intereſt of their immortal Souls. Let us conſider whom we Repreſent, and what is the Nature and Deſign of our Commiſſion. Our Commiſſion is deriv'd from *the moſt High God*, and it relates to the eternal Welfare of the Souls of Men. Let us therefore inviolably maintain the Honour of him that ſent us, and faithfully deliver his Meſſage to them, to whom we are ſent. Let us remember that the Holy Scriptures were committed to our Charge, and let no Temptation prevail with us to betray ſo great a Truſt.

Let us not deceive Our ſelves, and our Flock, by making a falſe Interpretation of the Book of God; for we can only explain it: it is not in our Power to alter it: whatever Senſe we put upon it, the Record will be ſtill the ſame, and remain as a perpetual Witneſs againſt us, if we prevaricate with God and Men. Let

Let not the plauſible ſhew of Tenderneſs and Moderation, incline us to conceal the Heinouſneſs and Danger of Sin; or draw a favourable Repreſentation of the Caſe of wicked Men: But, Let us manifeſt our real Friendſhip and Charity, by dealing Impartially with them, and giving them a Sight (how diſagreeable ſoever) of themſelves.

Let us not endeavour to gain their Favour for a time, by pretending to put off *the Evil-Day*, and ſcreening them from the Thoughts of a miſerable Eternity: But, Let us take a ſurer way, to obtain their laſting Approbation, by openly declaring thoſe important Truths, that will reſtore them to a right Judgment of Things, and *make them Wiſe unto Salvation*.

Let us not baſely inſinuate our ſelves into their Affections, by joyning with thoſe treacherous Enemies, and being ſubſervient to their Luſts. But, Let us deſerve their juſt Eſteem, by a reſolute Integrity, and recommend our ſelves to their Reaſon, tho' we cannot conquer their Paſſions.

Let us be *inſtant with them, in Seaſon, out of Seaſon*, tho' we provoke them to Injure us, for the faithful Diſcharge of our Duty: and, Let us wait with Patience till we have made them relent, and rendred them aſham'd of the unreaſonable Prejudice, they have born againſt us.

Let not the Promiſes or Threatnings of the Great, and the Mighty, withdraw us from our appointed Charge: But, Let us

ſtand

ſtand as *Watchmen of the Lord*, always mindful of the Duties of our Station, and obſerving every Opportunity of doing Good to the Souls of Men.

Let us deſpiſe the Treaſures of the Wicked: *Let their Gifts be to themſelves*; and, Let them give *their Rewards to others*. But, Let us *be faithful unto Death*; *and God, the righteous Judge, ſhall give us a Crown of Life.* Rev. 2. 10.

The Duty and Advantage of Self-Examination.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. MARY's.

1 COR. XI. 28.

Let a Man Examine himself.

THE Examination of our ſelves is a Duty moſt eſpecially neceſſary, before we partake of the Lord's-Supper, as it qualifies us for the receiving of that ineſtimable Bleſſing, and cleanſes and prepares our Hearts, that the Son of God may vouchſafe to be ſpiritually preſent with us. And it was enjoyned by the Apoſtle, with an immediate Regard to that holy Sa-

crament. *Let a man Examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

But it is alſo a Duty at all times neceſſary.

Firſt, As it gives us a true ſenſe of our Condition.

Secondly, As it inclines us to be tender and favourable in our Cenſures of others.

Thirdly, As it makes us cautious, leſt we offend.

Fourthly, As it takes us off from a vain Confidence and Preſumption.

And, *Laſtly*, As it fills us with well-grounded Peace and Satisfaction, and enables us to go with a Juſt Aſſurance to a greater Examination, at the aweful Tribunal of Almighty God.

And *Firſt*, Self-Examination will give us a true ſenſe of our Condition. The Knowledge of our ſelves is of the moſt immediate Concernment to us, and of the greateſt Uſe and Importance in the Conduct of humane Life: and yet there is hardly any thing more neglected, and no Neglect more ſtrange and unaccountable than this: for the Means of obtaining this Knowledge are daily preſented to us, and every time that we think, we have an Opportunity of being acquainted with our ſelves. This Knowledge is not hidden from us, neither is it afar off. *It is not in Heaven, that we ſhould ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to Heaven and bring it to us?*

Neither is it beyond the Sea, that we ſhould ſay, Who ſhall go over the Sea and fetch it to us. But it is in our Heart, and our Boſom can diſcloſe it. Yet fooliſh Man chooſes to be a Stranger to himſelf, and deſires to underſtand every thing but his own State and Condition.

We ſeek out the things that are too hard for us, and ſearch for things that are above our ſtrength; we are curious in unneceſſary Matters, and regardleſs of that which is needful for us. Our reſtleſs Mind travels over diſtant Countries, and loſes and perplexes it ſelf, that it may acquire a vain ſhew of Wiſdom, but it ſeldom conſiders what we ought to learn, as we are Men and Chriſtians. We are buſy in enquiring after the Cuſtoms and Manners of different Nations, or vainly endeavour to reform the Diſorders of our own: and we cannot be at leiſure to look into our inward State, or manage that great Affair, upon which our preſent Peace and our future Happineſs depends. We ſtudy to adapt our ſelves to the prevailing Faſhions of a corrupt Generation, and to attain to Perfection in thoſe things, which are perpetually ſubject to Change, and are to Day eſteemed, and will to Morrow be derided.

Or if we do not reſt in thoſe ſlight ſuperficial Ornaments, yet our Time is ſpent only in the purſuit of more ſerious Trifles, ſuch as ſerve barely to amuſe an impertinent Humour, and pleaſe an idle Curioſity. For

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we eagerly attempt to pry into thoſe things, which God in his infinite Wiſdom has concealed from us, and impudently pretend to account for the wonderful Works of God, and explain the manner of his Operations, according to our fooliſh arbitrary Opinions. And inſtead of turning our Thoughts upon our ſelves; we are always labouring to divert them from their proper Object, and to carry them to the fartheſt Diſtance from us.

But we ſhould not thus miſ-apply them, were we not unmindful of our Intereſt. The very Heathen eſteem'd it a principal part of Wiſdom, for every Man to know Himſelf; and ſuch was their value for it, that when one of their Philoſophers deliver'd this divine Precept, they believed it to be ſent down from Heaven, and concluded that the Gods only could give it to Men. And they juſtly ſet this Value upon it; for our Condition in this World abſolutely requires the ſtricteſt Care and Examination: and we are expoſed to the worſt of Dangers, by continuing in a choſen Ignorance of our ſelves; for we are compaſſed about with Enemies that are endued with Power to aſſault, and Cunning to ſurprize us. We are placed in a deceitful World, that pleaſes while it betrays us. And our Nature is weak and unguarded, and too readily hearkens to the flattering Inſinuations of the Tempter; and lets in a Multitude of Evils upon us. Our Affections diſpoſe us to receive the moſt pernicious Impreſſions, and our Will bends and

inclines us towards Evil. It therefore highly concerns us to consider the tendency of our Actions; in what part we are most likely to be prevail'd upon, and what are *the Sins that most easily beset us.* By observing our first approach towards a Compliance with them, we may prevent our proceeding farther in the way to Destruction; and by a seasonable Care and Caution may use such Means as will most effectually secure us from it. Whereas, if we forbear to enquire into the Posture of our Affairs, we shall daily lose ground, and yet be insensible of our Loss, and fall from one Wickedness to another, 'till we are past Recovery: and our Case will resemble that of *Ephraim*, *when strangers had devoured his strength, and he knew it not, and grey Hairs were here and there upon him, yet he knew it not.*

Even our best Actions stand in need of a faithful Examination, for we are liable to be deceiv'd even in our admired Perfections. A vicious Principle too often lurks at the bottom, and taints and corrupts the whole. We think with Pleasure of the Service that we have perform'd to God, or the Charity we have shewn to Men. But had we no selfish, mercenary View, no Pride, nor Ostentation? I fear these Blemishes do frequently cleave to us, and after we have done our Duty, if we would reflect aright upon the Performance, even this Reflection would dispose us to Humility. St. *Paul* has taught us, that the most specious Actions

are

are as nothing, unleſs they proceed from virtuous Principles. He gives the greateſt Commendation of that moſt excellent Gift of Charity, but he condemns the Appearance of it, when there is no Life or Spirit to ſupport it. *Tho' I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be Burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* So near may we ſeem to come to this glorious Virtue, and yet fall ſhort of it. 1 Cor. 13. 3.

What a goodly Show did *the young Man* make in the Goſpel; when after our Saviour had repeated the Commandments, he boldly anſwer'd, *All theſe have I kept from my Youth up.* But he was told by Truth it ſelf, that *he yet lacked one Thing*; and becauſe he dealt not impartially with himſelf, that one thing was always wanting.

That we may not be thus miſtaken, it behoves us to ſearch and try our Hearts, and bring all our Actions to a daily Examination.

To know God and our Selves, is the only Means of attaining to a true ſenſe of our Condition. God has been pleaſed to reveal Himſelf to us in a manner ſuitable to our Capacities; and the more we meditate upon his Perfections, ſo much the more we ſhall admire him, *Who is Great, Wonderful and Holy*; and when we are filled with the Thoughts of his Divine Majeſty, we may look down upon our ſelves, who are ſinful Duſt and Aſhes. And as we by turns, behold the Beams of his Glory, and the ſhameful Tokens of our Weakneſs and Corruption,

we ſhall continually raiſe our Minds to nobler Conceptions of God, and poſſeſs them with an humbler Opinion of our Frailties and Infirmities. For, *The Lord is high above all the World, and his Glory above the Heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath his dwelling ſo high, and yet humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth?* As for us, *He took us out of the Duſt, and lifted us out of the Mire, that he might ſet us with Princes, even with the Princes of his People.*

Pſ. 113.5, 6,7.

As the Examination of our ſelves will give us a true ſenſe of our Condition; ſo,

Secondly, It will incline us to be tender and favourable in our Cenſure of others.

If we are conſcious of our own Imperfections (and if we ever entertain one ſerious Thought, we cannot but be conſcious of them) we ſhall not haſtily pronounce Judgment upon thoſe, who are Tempted as we are, and with us, are too willing to comply with the Temptation.

A frequent Review of our Caſe will ſhew us the many Evils, which our Nature is too prone to commit. And if we have any Concern for our Miſcarriages, we ſhall bewail the Faults of others, inſtead of making them the ſubject of our Mirth, and cenſorious Laughter. For it becomes us much rather to Pity and Excuſe, than expoſe them to Ridicule. And we ſhall not delight to reproach any Man, that is ſo unhappy as to fall into Sin, if we remember that we are

all

all worthy of Puniſhment. Were we accuſtomed to think of the greatneſs of our Guilt, and to obſerve the ſtill increaſing meaſure of our Iniquities, we ſhould be mov'd with Compaſſion, at the ſight of thoſe miſerable Wretches, that are bound in the ſame Chains, and labour under the ſame accurſed Slavery. We ſhould forbear to caſt forth thoſe ſevere Reflections that cut them to the Heart, and provoke them in their Diſtreſs. *For a backbiting Tongue hath diſquieted many, and driven them from Nation to Nation: Strong Cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the Houſes of Great Men. The ſtroke of the Whip maketh marks in the Fleſh, but the ſtroke of the Tongue breaketh the Bones. Many have fallen by the Edge of the Sword, but not ſo many as have fallen by the Tongue; we ſhould therefore weigh our Words in a Balance, and make a Door and Bar for the Mouth.* And did we form a right Judgment of our Sinfulneſs, we ſhould abſtain from ſhooting forth *the poyſonous Arrows* of Cenſure, and *the bitter Words* of Calumny, ſince our own Heart would tell us, that they might with too much Juſtice be retorted upon Our-ſelves, and raiſe the ſame Diſorders in our Breaſts, which they cauſe in others. Our Reaſon would accuſe and reproach us, while we endeavour to fix a Mark of Infamy upon them, and calls us home to look after the Intereſt of our Souls, and correct the Obſtinacy of our depraved Will, and check the Violence of our unruly Affections. *Eccleſ.* 28.

And

And if we once ſincerely underſtand this neceſſary Buſineſs, it will perpetually employ us, and afford us but little leiſure, to receive or ſpread abroad malicious Reports. For the Mind of Man is a World of Iniquity, a Province large enough to engage all his Labours, and confine him to Himſelf. He need not extend his Thoughts to foreign Kingdoms, or take upon him the unwieldy Weight of Publick Affairs: nay, he need not officiouſly thruſt himſelf into his Neighbour's Concerns, but may permit every one to ſtand or fall by the Judgment of our Common Maſter. For the difficulty of governing himſelf increaſes very faſt upon him, and his Accounts are ſwelling to ſo great a bulk, that they require a daily Review. There is an innumerable Company of Sins that cleave to his Thoughts, Words, and Actions; and it is a Work that is more than ſufficient for him to remember, the Breaches of his paſt Reſolutions, to expreſs his Sorrow for his frequent Failings, and to guard himſelf againſt the return of Danger. And his Charge would be heavy enough, were he only to perform the Buſineſs of *to Day*, without having the Offences of *Yeſterday* lying upon him, or waiting till to Morrow for an additional Burthen. He may Juſtly ſay, Who can number the Crimes which Day by Day I commit againſt God? *O how great is the Sum of them! If I tell them they are more in number than the Sand; when I wake up, they are preſent with me,* and when I lay my ſelf

ſelf down to reſt, they appear before me. But he alone can diſtinctly remember them, *who can number the Sand of the Sea, and the Drops of Rain, and the Days of Eternity; who can find out the Height of Heaven, and the Bredth of the Earth and the Deep.*

Let it then ſuffice a Man to Examine himſelf, and let him leave the Conduct of other Men to be Examined by that all-ſeeing Judge, who beholds all the Actions of Mankind, in one comprehenſive View; even that All-wiſe and Omniſcient God, without whoſe Knowledge *a Hair of our Head doth not fall to the Ground.*

And if our Sins againſt God will afford us Matter enough for the moſt frequent and moſt careful Examination: This Examination will,

Thirdly, Make us Cautious leſt we offend.

For when we perceive how large our Account is, we ſhall be afraid to aggravate and enhance it, and ſince our Guilt renders the Sight of our ſelves diſagreeable to us, we ſhall endeavour to remove *the accurſed thing that troubles us.* Man would often refrain from Sin, had he a juſt Reverence for himſelf, and did he remember that he is his own Witneſs, Accuſer, and Judge.

One might imagin that the Thoughts of a general Judgment, ſhould give an effectual check to our Vices, and take away all the Charms of a moſt agreeable Temptation. But this powerful Argument loſes its force, becauſe

cauſe it is at a Diſtance from us, and we are very willing to believe that it is much farther than it is. And the only way to give us a lively and prevailing ſenſe of it, is to bring our Actions before the Tribunal of our Conſcience, and try them by our impartial Reaſon. For we ſhall *ſtand in awe and ſin not*, when we allow theſe ſuperior Faculties their due Authority, and ſhall be aſhamed to commit any thing contrary to their Dictates, when we know it muſt ſoon be accounted for, and brought into Judgment. And the Sentence which we are conſtrained to paſs upon our Vices, will put us in mind of our final Doom, and ſhew us the folly of doing thoſe things to Day, for which we ſhall call our ſelves Fools for ever. No one would dare make himſelf his own Enemy, were he fully aſſured that he ſhould *be found out by this his Enemy*; we cannot bear the upbraiding Reflections of other Men, and the fear of Shame has a mighty influence over us. And were it our conſtant Practice to reflect upon our paſt Conduct, we ſhould fear the Reproaches of our Thoughts as much as we do the Cenſure of the World. And this would make us take heed to our ways; that our Minds might be at Peace, and we might boldly enter into the ſecret Chambers of our Breaſt, and delight to *commune with* our Selves. The Vices that appeared againſt us at one Examination, would diſcourage us from adding to them, leſt another ſhould preſent more odious Objects

jects to our View, and our *troubled Sea* ſhould ſtill continue to *caſt up Mire and Dirt.* We could not be ſo averſe to Peace, as to lay in more Matter for Repentance, and bring a heavier Charge upon our Souls. We could not be ſo Unnatural as to wound our Conſciences, were we us'd to touch them to the quick, and probe the Sore; and unleſs we are ſo imprudent as to ſuſpend the Examination, it will moſt aſſuredly force us to forſake our Sins; for we forbear *to come to the Light, leſt our Deeds ſhould be reproved*; but if we bring them to it, it will neceſſarily kindle our Hatred and Abhorrence of them. And the Diſcharge of this Duty will,

Fourthly, Take us off from a vain Confidence and Preſumption.

The State of a Sinner is full of Horror, and if we have any Notion of Guilt, or Senſe of Miſery, we cannot think or ſpeak of it without trembling. But deluded Man is willing to believe that all is well, tho' he ſtands in the midſt of Danger; and by neglecting to conſider the Nature and Conſequences of his Actions, he lulls himſelf into a deceitful Peace and treacherous Security. And whilſt he is *heaping up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath*, and enlarging the number of his Tranſgreſſions, he fondly entertains a pleaſing Opinion of his Caſe, and vainly imagines, that he needs no Repentance. This fatal Error confirms the Conqueſts of the Tempter, and is the moſt prevailing Method by which he draws Men into Perdition.

It

It is indeed beyond Expreſſion ſtrange, that he ſhould perſwade us to deſcend to the Commiſſion of Sin, when the Curſes of God are ſo plainly denounced againſt us, and Hell is gaping before us. But tho' we are ſo wretchedly deceived, as to Act againſt the Dictates of Reaſon, and in defiance of the moſt dreadful Evils, yet when the ſtrength of the Temptation is abated, and we come to reflect in our cooler Hours, we relent at the Thoughts of our former Madneſs, and wonder how we could chooſe Deſtruction. It therefore requires all the Artifices of Satan to render us inſenſible of our Danger, and either forgetful that we have Sin'd, or regardleſs of the certain Effects that will proceed from it. When he has maſtered this Difficulty, he makes us fond of the Cords that he has caſt about us, and averſe to all Attempts of breaking the Snare, and returning to our Selves. Then we give up all our Strength, like *Sampſon*, to the bewitching *Delilah*, and are ignorant like him, when *he wiſt not that the Lord was departed from him.*

Judges 16.

That this pernicious Deluſion may not paſs upon us, we cannot uſe a more proper Expedient than Self-Examination: for if this Duty is often repeated, it will keep up a freſh and conſtant ſenſe of our Guilt, and ſet our real Condition before us. We ſhall behold our Actions in a proper Light, and have a perfect View of the Circumſtances that attend them. And when our Vices ap-

appear in their natural Deformity, we ſhall impatiently deſire to put them away from us; or if we are ſo Fooliſh as to retain them, we ſhall be full of anxious Thoughts, and always mindful of our Miſery. And we cannot ſtill be fond of it, and ſtill purſue Eternal Deſtruction.

Did we fairly ſtate our Accounts, and obſerve how they riſe every Day, our ſubtile Adverſary could never perſwade us that we are in perfect Safety, or conceal from us the Number and Heinouſneſs of our Offences; for our Experience would contradict his flattering Inſinuations, and when he cries, *Peace, Peace,* our Heart would anſwer to him, *What have I to do with Peace,* while I am at Enmity with my Conſcience, and my God.

Moſt of thoſe unhappy Souls, that are doom'd to endleſs Torments, do too late bewail the Neglect of this important Duty. They are fallen into the Depth of Miſery, becauſe they would not enquire whether they were Going, nor *open their Eyes 'till they were in Flames.* They never conſider'd their Actions, 'till all Conſideration was in vain, and they were ſurprized into that moſt deplorable State, becauſe they forbore to think what would be their Portion.

Sinful Man too plainly reſembles the careleſs Prodigal, that gratifies himſelf with the moſt profuſe Expences, and never examines whether his Eſtate will bear them. But as long as his Creditors anſwer his extravagant

gant Demands, and his Artful Flatterers miniſter to his Luxury, he lives without Thought or Forecaſt; or if he thinks at all, he concludes that his Fortune is too great to be impaired. In the mean time his Debts inſenſibly increaſe, and prey upon and devour his Subſtance; and yet he delights in his admired Gaiety, and careſſes every one that encourages him to follow his Pleaſures, 'till he is ſwallowed up in unexpected Ruin, and it carries all before it, *like a wide breaking in of Waters.*

Our future State depends entirely upon our preſent Conduct, and if we miſcarry in this, we are undone for ever: This requires our conſtant Obſervation, for there is the greateſt Danger in being deceived in this; and yet we eaſily ſuffer our ſelves to be impoſed upon by an unfaithful Examination, and are too ready to receive it. But if we regard either Happineſs or Miſery, we muſt ſearch the inmoſt Retirements of our Heart; and endeavour to recollect all the Vices which we have ſuffered to paſs without the deepeſt Repentance. For though they were long ſince committed, and have been for a long time forgotten, yet they ſtand upon Record againſt us, and will never be blotted out, 'till we have ſincerely Repented of them. We, alas, preſume that our Condition is ſafe, tho' the remains of Guilt ſtill cleave to us, and our former Iniquities continue in their full force. And unleſs we bring them to a Trial, while their horrid Aggravations are

yet

yet in our Minds, we gladly extenuate them, and put the moſt agreeable Colours upon them; and we either deny that we have Offended, or find a favourable Excuſe for every Sin, and are inclined to ſay, *Is it not a little one?*

It is indeed an ungrateful Work, to rake in the Filth and ſecret Naughtineſs of our Heart; and we chooſe much rather to reſt in an Opinion, that no Examination is neceſſary. And if our Wounds are ſleightly Skin'd over, and the loathſome Objects are concealed from our View, we care not what Evil lurks within, or how faſt we turn to Corruption.

But it is infinitely better, to make a perfect, tho' painful Search, that we may know the Cauſes of our Diſorder, and the Root and Foundation of it; than to pleaſe our ſelves with a falſe Appearance, while the cover'd Evil ſpreads and inſinuates it ſelf into the vital Parts.

After we have born the Difficulties of our firſt Enquiries, and been accuſtomed to Examine our ſelves, this Duty will become eaſy to us, and give the Mind firm Confidence in it ſelf.

For, *Laſtly*, It fills us with well grounded Peace and Satisfaction, and enables us to go with a juſt Aſſurance, to a greater Examination at the awful Tribunal of Almighty God.

This is a Happineſs which the Wicked cannot attain to, and inſtead of it, they en-

deavour to compoſe themſelves into a vain ſhew of Peace; and are fond of being betrayed into a pleaſing Error. But it is forced and unnatural, and no more to be deſired, than the Swelling of a diſeaſed Body, or the unwilling Smiles of a Man that is tortured with inexpreſſible Pain: Then only are we truly ſatisfied, when we faithfully obſerve the Degrees of our Progreſs, and at the Cloſe of the Evening review the Actions of the paſt Day; and at the returning Morning ſet forth with a clear and quiet Breaſt, to run our appointed Courſe. Then we plainly diſcern the Nature of our Condition, what Temptations we have conquer'd, what we have yielded to, and what Means are proper to prevent a ſecond Compliance. The Scheme of our Life is plain before us, and is regularly preſented to us: whereas if we defer the neceſſary Buſineſs of Examination, our Affairs will daily become more perplexing and intricate; and the Reaſons for Delay will have a greater force upon us, and we ſhall be more afraid to ſtate our Caſe, and leſs able to unfold it. And the Mind will labour under a confuſed Conſciouſneſs of Guilt, and be tormented with dreadful Apprehenſions of future Miſery. Thus the Man of Pleaſure, that might have kept his Fortune entire, if he had frequently looked back upon his Expences; brings himſelf into Perplexity and Trouble, by a continued Neglect, and careleſs Conduct. He is unwilling to come to an Account with Him-

Himſelf, when he might eaſily clear and ſettle it; and puts it off from Day to Day, till he is entangled with an infinite Variety of Cares, and knows not where to begin, or how to carry himſelf thro' the puzling Examination. Tho' he ſuſpects that his Ruin is approaching, and is ſeized with ill-boding Fears, yet he dares not enquire where the Danger lies, or how he may guard againſt it. But the Man that prudently adjuſts all his Expences, and keeps his Accounts within a narrow Compaſs, has the moſt perfect Enjoyment of his Fortune. For he exactly knows the Meaſure of it, and chearfully allows himſelf to make uſe of it, without any ſecret Diſtruſt or Fear, that it will fall ſhort of his Expectations: an agreeable Proſpect is open'd to him, and his Affairs are drawn forth in an exact and beautiful Order.

And in like manner, if we fairly conſider our Behaviour in the Time paſt, and ſift and weigh our Actions immediately after they are done; we ſhall have no Clog or Weight upon our Breaſts, but a well grounded Confidence that we know our ſelves, and have performed our Duty. And we ſhall think with Chearfulneſs of the Time to come, being at Leiſure to ſpend it well, and diſcharge the Buſineſs of every Hour, as it paſſes a long. That, and That only, will be our Care, when the Actions of our Youth are juſtly ſtated, and our Accounts prepared for the great Examination. Then

we ſhall reflect with Pleaſure, and be ſatisfied with them, as the Creator was with *all his Works*: Then we ſhall rejoice to be familiar with our Minds, for they will be a continual Spring and Fountain of Joy: And then we ſhall *acquaint our ſelves with God, and be at Peace.* The faithful Management of our Stewardſhip will encourage us to wiſh for the Coming of our Lord; and we ſhall long to deliver up the Talents that we have rightly improved. The Thoughts of Death will loſe all their Terror; Since it will not prevent our Expectation, or ſurprize us *in an Hour when we look not for it.* We ſhall retire to our Beds at Night, as if the Buſineſs of Life were entirely finiſh'd, and we were then going to our Grave; and we ſhall riſe in the Morning, as if we heard the mighty Summons, *Ariſe ye Dead and come to Judgment.* And when the Powerful Voice commands us to go forth, and the Sound of the Trumpet reaches to the Ends of the World, we ſhall lift up our ſelves with a Joyful Hope, and ſtand undaunted in that dreadful Day, when *the Sun ſhall become Black as Sackcloth of Hair, and the Moon ſhall become as Blood; when the Stars of Heaven ſhall fall to the Earth, even as a Fig-Tree caſteth her untimely Figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty Wind; when the Heavens ſhall depart as a Scroll when it is rolled together, and every Mountain and Iſland ſhall be moved out of their places; when the Kings of the Earth, and the Great Men, and the Rich Men, and the Chief Captains*

Captains ſhall endeavour to hide themſelves in the Dens and the Rocks of the Mountains; and when even the Mountains and the Rocks ſhall melt away, then ſhall we behold, with unſpeakable Joy, *Him that ſits on the Throne, from whoſe Face the Earth and the Heavens ſhall fly away.*

And when *the Books are open'd*, we ſhall call to Mind our paſt Examination of our ſelves, and ſee thoſe Actions written in *the Book of Life*, which were before approv'd by our Conſcience. And the impartial Teſtimony, which it gave to us, will be ratified by the Voice of our Judge, With *Well done Good and Faithful Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord.*

Let us then examine our ſelves every Day, and let no Buſineſs or Pleaſure divert us from this neceſſary Work.

Let us abſtain from Evil, becauſe it will not bear to be examin'd, when we have done it; And, Let us do the Thing that is Good, that we may delight to come to a frequent Examination.

Let us paſs Sentence upon our ſelves, with as much Juſtice and Equity, as if the whole World were preſent at the Trial; And, Let us take Care to deſerve ſuch a Sentence, as will be confirm'd by Almighty God, to our Eternal and Inconceivable Happineſs.

Let us ſtedfaſtly reſolve to do our Duty, and carefully examine whether we have kept our Reſolution.

Thus we ſhall always *ſtand with our Loins girded about, and our Lamps burning.* Thus we ſhall always expect, and always prepare, *to meet the Bridegroom. And bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

The

The Effect of Righteouſneſs, Quietneſs and Aſſurance for ever.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. MARY's.

PSALM CXIX. 6.

Then ſhall I not be aſhamed: when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.

IT highly concerns us ſo to behave our ſelves in every Circumſtance of Life, that we may enjoy the Good-will of Men, the Approbation of our Conſcience,

and the Favour of God. This is the moſt perfect Happineſs that we can attain to in this preſent State; for it gives us the livelieſt Reliſh of the Bleſſings of this World, and takes off the Edge of all the Calamities that can befall us.

How great is our Pleaſure, when we know that the beſt Part of Mankind look with Complacency upon our Welfare; when our Conſcience heightens our Proſperity, with thoſe delightful Reflections, which are *a continual Feaſt*, and when our gracious God ſheds the Light of his Countenance upon us!

And how little ſhall we regard any temporal Evils, when we are aſſur'd that no one has any Cauſe to be our Enemy: when our Hearts tell us that we do not ſuffer *for any Iniquity in our Hands:* and when we can boldly ſay, *Our Witneſs is in Heaven, and our Record on High.*

Job 16. 17, 19.

It was a juſt Senſe of this Happineſs, and of the Means that conduc'd to it, which ſtrengthen'd the Reſolution of *Job: Till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me; my Righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go; my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.*

Job 27. 5, 6.

It was the conſtant Performance of his Duty, that embolden'd the good *Hezekiah* to make his Appeal to God, when Sickneſs preſs'd him ſore. *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walk'd before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight.*

2 *Kings* 20. 3.

And

And for the Sake of this Satisfaction, the Holy Pſalmiſt breath'd forth the moſt fervent Deſires of performing the Service of God. *O that my Ways were directed that I might keep thy Statutes! Then* (ſays he) *ſhall I not be aſham'd, when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.* That is, 'If I make the 'Law of God the Meaſure of all my Actions, 'and obſerve that perfect Rule, in all the 'Occurrences of Life, I ſhall look with 'Chearfulneſs upon the World, and neither 'be afraid to enquire into the State of my 'Soul, nor aſham'd to appear before a Juſt 'and Righteous God. My Integrity will 'ſupport me, with that ſure and well-'grounded Confidence, which will not ſuffer 'me to be diſmay'd in the Time of Tribu-'lation, in the Hour of Death, or in the 'Day of Judgment. *Pſ.* 119. 5, 6.

And *if we put Iniquity far away, and let no Wickedneſs dwell in our Tabernacles, then ſhall we lift up our Face without Spot; yea, we ſhall be ſtedfaſt, and ſhall not fear. And our Age ſhall be clearer than the Noon-day, we ſhall ſhine forth, we ſhall be as the Morning. And we ſhall be ſecure, becauſe there is hope, and take our reſt in Safety. And we ſhall lie down, and none ſhall make us afraid.* *Job* 14.

I ſhall therefore conſider the Advantages that we ſhall receive, from a regular, uniform Obedience to God's Commandments.

Firſt, As it gives us Peace of Mind.
Secondly, As it encourages us to look chearfully upon the World. And

And *Thirdly*, As it fills us with a lively Hope and Confidence in God.

And *Firſt*, As it gives us Peace of Mind. That we may enjoy Satisfaction from our ſelves, we muſt endeavour to diſcharge our whole Duty. It is indeed impoſſible for us to come up to the Perfection of God's Commandments, while we are compaſs'd about with Infirmities, and God in his infinite Mercy is pleas'd to conſider our Weakneſs, and require only our ſincere Endeavours to ſerve him. But if we would reap any Comfort or Pleaſure from the Diſcharge of our Duty, we muſt not be wanting in thoſe Meaſures of Obedience which the divine Goodneſs condeſcends to accept.

For if we do our Work by Halves, and ſuffer our ſelves to remain in any wilful Sins, hoping to make amends for it, by performing ſeveral Branches of our Duty, we ſhall be fatally deceiv'd, for our Vices will riſe in Judgment againſt us, and imbitter all the Satisfaction that ariſes from the occaſional Practice of Virtue. *We cannot ſerve Two Maſters*, for our good Actions will reproach us, for the contrary Qualities which yet remain in us; and our Sins will ſtrike a Damp upon the Pleaſures that flow from our partial and imperfect regard to Religion.

But *Then*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall I not be aſham'd when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.* This is the only Way to enjoy entire Satisfaction. The Sinner hopes to obtain

obtain his beloved Peace and Security, by renouncing Religion, and becoming compleatly Wicked, and thorough-pac'd in Iniquity. But ſtill his Thoughts will reprove and upbraid him.

But the truly Wiſe Man reſolves, with holy *David*, to live in ſuch an exact Conformity to the Will of God, that *no Spot may cleave to his Hands*, no Dregs of Vice may leſſen his Happineſs.

And the Man that makes this his Care, is in the firſt Place approv'd by his Boſom-witneſs, and *ſatisfied from himſelf*. This is the immediate Reward of Virtue; and God has wiſely order'd it, that as ſoon as we have done well, we ſhould be encourag'd to continue in well-doing, by the Approbation of right Reaſon; and whenſoever we ſin againſt him, we ſhould alſo offend our ſelves, and be condemn'd by our own impartial Sentence. *Prov.* 14. 14.

The Man that is true to himſelf and his God, poſſeſſes that Peace of Mind, which is out of the Reach of the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life. He looks into his Breaſt, and ſees that all is well, and rejoices to bring his Actions to a faithful Examination, and even to offer himſelf to a daily Trial at the Tribunal of his Conſcience.

And it tells him, that he has acted ſuitably to the Rank in which his Maker has plac'd him, and to the Relation which he bears to a Juſt and Holy God. It aſſures him, that he has done thoſe Actions which he

he will delight to repeat, which he will reflect upon with Pleaſure in the Evil Day, which will ſtand him in great Stead, when the World it ſelf ſhall be no more.

Being ſatisfied that his Heart has nothing to lay to his Charge, he dares to be familiar with himſelf, and wants not thoſe Arts of Diverſion, thoſe Trains of Pleaſure, nor that Hurry of Buſineſs, which the Sinner is forc'd to have Recourſe to, but in vain.

The Happineſs of the righteous Man is very great, becauſe *his Heart condemns him not*; but much greater, becauſe *it gives him Confidence towards God, who is greater than his Heart, and knoweth all Things.*

1 *John* 3. 20, 21.

Whilſt he is diligent in the Buſineſs of Religion, he maintains *the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*; and that Service which is perfect Freedom, fills him with noble Thoughts, and decks him with a chearful Countenance, has ſome reſemblance of his future State, in which he will be like the Angels of God; whoſe Employment is worthy of ſuch exalted Spirits, who have the Honour to worſhip and adore the Lord of Glory for ever and ever.

But on the other Hand the Sinner is abaſh'd and aſham'd, becauſe he is in a State of Slavery; it gives him a mean abject Spirit, and makes him look down upon himſelf with *Confuſion of Face.* He is at the Diſpoſal of every Luſt and Paſſion; and one ſaith unto him, *go, and he goeth*, another, *come, and he cometh*, and a third, *do this, and he doth it.* And he

he cannot but be ſenſible, that he is ſtooping to thoſe Actions that are very Unbecoming, and tend to his Diſhonour. And while he loaths his own Behaviour, and performs his ſlaviſh Task with Shame and Reluctance, he knows that he has brought himſelf into this ſervile Condition, and ſold the glorious Privileges of his Nature for a Thing of nought.

Our Reaſon, for which we ſet ſo high a Value upon our ſelves, is the Inſtrument either of the greateſt Happineſs, or the ſharpeſt Miſery. If we are regardleſs of this faithful Witneſs, and do thoſe Things that are contrary to its kind Admonitions, it will not fail to purſue us with ſevere Complaints, to upbraid us with our Guilt, and diſplay our Shame. And the Man thas has acted againſt the Dictates of Reaſon, and fallen beneath himſelf, cannot be ignorant of his Baſeneſs. He ſees his own Deformity, and has a bitter Foretaſt of that Portion of Contempt that will be pour'd upon him, when he ſhall ſtand expos'd upon the Theatre of the World, and appear in all his Guilt, before *the Aſſembly of the Saints.*

But if we chooſe Reaſon for our Guide, and bring our Actions to be tried by its impartial Judgment, and by the Will of God; it will often preſent to our View the beautiful Uniformity of our Life, and delight to pronounce its juſt Approbation.

How ſhall we be pleas'd with the Survey, and rejoice to behold our paſt Conduct ratified

tified and confirm'd by its Authority! And how carefully ſhould we ſtand in awe of it! How much does it concern us, to preſerve a conſtant Senſe of the Dignity of our Nature! for if we maintain a true value for thoſe Faculties with which God has endued us, we ſhall not deſcend to any ſinful Action; we ſhall not have any Reaſon to be aſham'd.

Having taken Care to live at Peace with our ſelves, and to be approv'd by our own Minds; by having reſpect unto all God's Commandments; our Obedience to them, will,

Secondly, encourage us to look chearfully upon the World. For the Cauſes of That Fear, That Jealouſy, That Suſpicion, and Thoſe ſurprizing Apprehenſions, with which we at any Time meet our Neighbour, are deeply rooted in our Breaſts; and they are deriv'd from our Sins, Thoſe never-failing Sources of Evil. Our Conſcience, which is to us as a Thouſand Witneſſes, makes us as uneaſy, as fearful of Diſcovery, as if a Thouſand had really obſerv'd our Actions: And when we are *found out* by This our *Enemy*, we cannot but imagine that every one has *found us out*. But the Good Man, has no watchful Eye to dread, no ſecret Shame. As he knows the Integrity of his Heart, ſo he wiſhes that all Men could look into the Depth of it, and ſearch its inmoſt Retirements.

Having no Deſign, but to ſatisfy his Conſcience, to do juſtice to his Brother, and to pleaſe his God, he wiſhes that *his Actions*

were

were as clear as the Light, and his Dealings as the Noon-day: for he wants no Pretences, no private Reſerves.

And he takes the eaſieſt, the ſafeſt, and the moſt ſatisfactory Courſe of Life. His Way is plain before him, and he needs not trouble himſelf with any Enquiry but this, Whether the Action that he is going to commit, is conſiſtent with his Duty to God. *For the Integrity of the Upright ſhall guide him, and the Righteouſneſs of the Perfect ſhall direct his Way.* Prov. 11. 3. 5. He is never at a Loſs, never confounded by the various Accidents of Life. For he acts upon thoſe Principles that are unalterably Good, and extort the Veneration even of the worſt of Men. It being his ſtedfaſt Purpoſe to *keep Innocency, and do the Thing that is Right,* Pſ. 37. 38. he knows that the Reaſon of every Man, if it is ſuffer'd to judge freely, will concur with his own, in giving Teſtimony in his Behalf; and therefore he goes forth into the World, with an undaunted Chearfulneſs, and a lively Expectation of meeting with a fair Reception, and univerſal Benevolence. He is not alarm'd at the Sight of any one, for he has done no wrong, he has no *accurſed Thing* to *trouble* him.

And if the Tongue of Cenſure ſhould endeavour to fix its Calumnies upon him, and *ſhoot forth* its *poiſonous Arrows, even bitter Words,* they cannot diſturb the Harmony of his Thoughts, or make any Impreſſion upon him. He is ſafe in his Integrity, and beats off their furious Onſets with a fix'd and unmoveable Reſolution. Be-

Becauſe he cannot accuſe himſelf, he is Proof againſt any Accuſations; and they can no more affect him, than *the Arrows of the Mighty can, the Leviathan; the Flakes of whoſe Fleſh are join'd together; they are firm in themſelves; they cannot be moved. Darts are counted as Stubble, he laugheth at the ſhaking of the Spear.*

Job 41. 23, 29

What a glorious Spectacle was *Samuel*, when he durſt ſummon all *Iſrael* together to acknowledge his Fidelity! He look'd with unſpeakable Pleaſure upon the whole Train of his Actions, and ſaid unto them, *I am Old and Grey-headed, and I have walk'd before you from my Childhood unto this Day. Behold, here I am, witneſs againſt me, before the Lord, and before his Anointed: Whoſe Ox have I taken? Or whoſe Aſs have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppreſs'd? Or of whoſe Hand have I receiv'd any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith? and I will reſtore it you.*

1 Sam. 12. 1, 2, 3.

He appeal'd to a vaſt and innumerable Multitude of People, and bid a publick Defiance to Hatred, Malice, and Envy. But they could find no Objection againſt him. And they ſaid, *Thou haſt not defrauded us, nor oppreſs'd us, neither haſt thou taken ought of any Man's Hand. And he ſaid unto them, The Lord is Witneſs againſt you, and his Anointed is Witneſs this Day, that ye have not found ought in my Hands.* And they anſwer'd, Yea, his Conſcience *return'd anſwer to him, He is Witneſs.*

v. 4, 5.

The

The Man that can thus look the World in the Face, *ſhall never be mov'd. He will not be afraid of evil Tydings, for his Heart ſtandeth faſt and believeth in the Lord. His Heart is ſtabliſh'd, and will not ſhrink*; and if he can have any Enemies, *he ſhall not be aſham'd when he ſpeaketh with them.* Pſ. 112. 7, 8. Pſ. 127. 6.

With what Boldneſs did *the Perfect and Upright Job* defend himſelf againſt the Reproaches of his pretended Friends, becauſe he was aſſur'd that they had nothing to urge againſt him? *O* (ſays he) *that I knew where I might find God, that I might come even unto his Seat! I would order my Cauſe before him, and fill my Mouth with Arguments!* He deſired to *be weigh'd in an even Balance, that God might know his Integrity*; *becauſe he had not cover'd his Tranſgreſſions, as Adam, by hiding his Iniquity in his Boſom.* Job 23. 3, 4. Job 31. 6. Job. 31. 33

The rejoicing of the Apoſtles in Afflictions, in Neceſſities, in Diſtreſſes, was *the Teſtimony of their Conſcience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity*; *not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, they had had their Converſation in the World.* 2 Cor. 1. 12

And the Diſcharge of his Duty, together with the Holy Spirit of God, enabled the great Apoſtle St. *Paul, to go boldly to Jeruſalem, not knowing the Things that ſhould befall him there.* And tho' *he knew that all they, among whom he had gone preaching the Kingdom of God, ſhould ſee his Face no more*; *yet* the Expectation of *Bonds and Afflictions did not move him*, becauſe he could *take them to record that*

Acts 20. *Day, that he was pure from the Blood of all Men,* and was reſolv'd to go on in the faithful Execution of his high Truſt.

With what Courage and Authority did he plead his Cauſe, before a corrupt and licentious *Felix?*

Acts 24.

How chearfully did he anſwer for himſelf, when he was accus'd by the falſe and inſinuating *Tertullus? They neither found me in the Temple diſputing with any Man, neither raiſing up the People, neither in the Synagogues, nor in the City, neither can they prove the Things whereof they now accuſe me. But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the Way which they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, both of the Juſt, and Unjuſt. And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence toward God, and oward Men.*

V. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

How bravely did he ſtand at the Tribunal of *Feſtus?* with what powerful Words did he demand Juſtice of him? *Neither againſt the Law of the Jews, neither againſt the Temple, nor yet againſt Ceſar, have I offended any thing at all. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. For if I be an Offender, or have committed any thing worthy of Death, I refuſe not to die; but if there be none of theſe Things, whereof theſe accuſe me, no Man may deliver me unto them: I appeal unto Ceſar.*

Acts 25. 10, 11.

This

This is the undaunted Behaviour of Innocence. This is the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, which ſtrikes an Awe upon its Adverſaries. And it was this that embolden'd St. *Paul*, when he continued *Preaching the Kingdom of God, and Teaching thoſe Things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all Confidence, no Man forbidding him.* Act. 28. 31

And if after this glorious Example of Righteouſneſs, we may look back to any other, which the Old Teſtament can afford us, there is none greater than that of the three Children of the Captivity, that were upheld by their own Integrity, and durſt maintain it againſt the Torrent of an envious Faction, and the Anger of an idolatrous King.

When they refus'd to comply with the impious Edict of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *to worſhip the Golden Image which he had ſet up*, and he threaten'd to *caſt them into the midſt of a burning fiery Furnace*, with that profane Oſtentation, *Who is that God that ſhall deliver you out of my Hands?* With what Calmneſs of Mind did they receive his Threatning! *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee in this Matter; if it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine Hand, O King: But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor worſhip thy Golden Image which thou haſt ſet up.* Daniel 3.

Thus Innocence will carry us with Chearfulneſs through every Occurrence of Life; and it will give us the firmeſt Confidence at the Approaches of Death. Then the good Man triumphs over the King of Terrors, and breaks forth in the Words of Joy, 1 Cor. 15. 55. *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* for he has no ghaſtly Objects to affright him, no Sins of Injuſtice to cry out againſt him. But he remembers, that when *the Ear heard him, then it bleſs'd him, when the Eye ſaw him, it gave witneſs to him. The Bleſſing of them that were ready to periſh,* now *comes* in full meaſure *upon him,* and he is comforted in all his Pains, becauſe *he made* Job 29. *the Widows Heart to ſing for Joy.*

It is no ſmall Part of our Happineſs to be at Peace with our ſelves, and the World; but the utmoſt that we can deſire, is to have a lively Hope, and Confidence in God. Which is,

Thirdly, Another Effect of a regular, uniform Obedience to God's Commandments.

We may deceive our own Hearts, or be deceiv'd by them; and it is not altogether impoſſible to eſcape the Eye of the World; but no ſpecious Appearance can impoſe upon the God of Wiſdom; no ſecret Sins can lie hid from his ſearching Knowledge, no Strength can defend, no Covert can ſcreen us from his infinite Power. It therefore behoves us ſo to live, that his Almighty Arm may be our Defenſe; that his Wiſdom may approve our Conduct; that we may have

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reaſon to rejoice, that his All-ſeeing Eye was our Witneſs.

Then the Lord will be our Light, and our Salvation, whom then ſhall we fear? The Lord will be the Strength of our Life, of whom then ſhall we be afraid? Though an Hoſt of Men were laid againſt us, yet ſhall not our Hearts be afraid, and though there roſe up War againſt us, yet ſhall we put our Truſt in him. Pſ. 27. 1. 3.

Bleſſed is the Man that has thus made God his Friend, and by the Actions of an unblameable Life, has preſented himſelf, his Soul and Body, a Reaſonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice to God. Being entirely devoted to him, he can reſort to him in every Danger and Difficulty, and truly ask for his Counſel to direct, and his Aſſiſtance to deliver him.

That we may thus obtain his Favour, we muſt *keep his Commandments and Teſtimonies, and* continually remember, that *all our Ways are before him.* Pſal. 119. 168. We muſt not take our Meaſures from the vain Policy, and uncertain Affairs of this World, but reſolve, that be the Event what it will, it ſhall be our chief Concern to pleaſe him, and that we will do nothing that is inconſiſtent with, but every thing that is moſt agreeable to the Law of God. To this we muſt apply our Heart, and this muſt be the Aim, and End of all our Endeavours. And whatſoever we are engag'd in, we muſt not only conſider, whether it will bring us any preſent Satisfaction, or conduce to our worldly Intereſt, but act with nobler Views than theſe, and think

with our ſelves, whether it will bear the Sight of a Juſt and Holy God, and render us acceptable to him, *in whoſe Favour is Life.*

This Conſideration will reſtrain us from any mean or ſinful Action, for we ſhall bluſh at the mention of it, if we *ſet him always before us, who is of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity*; and ſhall tremble at the Thoughts of offending him, *to whom Power belongs.*

We muſt look farther than this Life, and not judge of our Actions, as they appear to us, when they are done in ſecret, and when we are willing to deceive our ſelves into a favourable Opinion of them, but as they will appear in the great and terrible Day of the Lord, when our Conſcience will repreſent them as they really are; when Satan will bring forth every Accuſation that can be alledg'd againſt us; when *the Books will be open'd*, in which every Thought, Word, and Work, are faithfully recorded; and when the glorious Company of the Apoſtles, the goodly Fellowſhip of the Prophets, and the noble Army of Martyrs, will be the Spectators of our Honour or Diſgrace.

If we keep up an habitual Senſe of theſe Things, we cannot but do our Duty. And then with what Comfort, with what Satisfaction, with what Delight, ſhall we look up to God, when our Life is well-pleaſing to him! How ſhall we be tranſported when we can reflect upon it without Reproach, and have no Cauſe to wiſh back the Time

that

that is paſt, and have nothing to bewail, but our ordinary Frailties and Infirmities! How Great and Godlike is our Happineſs, when we can take a Review of our Life, and approve of it, as the Creator did, of all his Works, when *he ſaw every Thing that he had made, and behold it was very good!* Gen. 1. 31.

Then we ſhall enjoy the Favour of God, when we ſhall moſt eſpecially ſtand in need of his Support; he will *comfort us when we lie upon our Bed, and make all our Bed eaſy in our Sickneſs.* The Thoughts of Religion will refreſh our Soul, when all the Riches of this World, ſhall not at all avail us; and when a Multitude of Diſeaſes lay ſiege againſt us, they will yield us Relief and Satisfaction. And when *the Snares of Death compaſs us round about,* we ſhall put our Confidence *in him, who killeth and maketh alive, who bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up; and he will deliver our Soul from Death, our Eyes from Tears, and our Feet from falling.* Pſal. 41. 3. Pſ. 116. 3. 1 Sam. 2. 6. Pſ. 116. 8.

And when we go forth to Judgment, the Solemnity of that awful Trial will ſtrike no Terror upon us, we ſhall behold *the Lord coming with Ten Thouſands of his Saints,* without any Dread or Concern; and ſhall *lift up our Heads with Joy* to the great Tribunal. *Then ſhall the Righteous Man ſtand with great Boldneſs, before the Face of ſuch as have afflicted him, and made no Account of his Labours. When they ſee it, they ſhall be troubled with terrible Fear, and ſhall be amaz'd at the Strangeneſs of his Salvation, ſo far beyond all that they look'd* Wiſ. 5. 1, 2 3, 4, 5.

for; and they repenting and groaning for Anguiſh of Spirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, This was he, whom we had ſometimes in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools counted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour. How is he number'd among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints?

The Judge of the whole World will look graciouſly upon him, and enliven him with the Beams of his Favour. *The Aſſembly of Juſt Men made Perfect* will admire the Man that is approv'd by the God of Holineſs. And Angels and Archangels will rejoice at the Sight of his Happineſs.

This is the Man whom God delights to
*Pſ.*149. 9. honour, and *ſuch Honour have all his Saints.*

Let us therefore conſider the Wiſdom of being Religious. It is this that will give us Peace with our ſelves, ſuch Peace, as the World cannot give. For this will make us regardleſs of the Evils of Life; and without this all the Pleaſures of the World can never make us happy.

This will procure us the Good-will of Mankind, and enable us to meet every one with an unſhaken Confidence.

This will recommend us to God, who is our beſt Friend, our watchful Protector, who will lead us by the Hand through all the Accidents of this World, and will be
*Gen.*15. 1. our *exceeding great Reward* in the other.

And this will ſtand the Teſt of the moſt impartial Judgment, when all other Wiſdom will be aſham'd to appear.

Let

Let us therefore again remember the Reſolution of *Job*, and let each of us ſay with him, *Till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me, my Righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go; my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.*

Jeruſalem's *Ruin, and* Judah's *Fall.*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

St. ANDREW's,

HOLBOURN.

ISAIAH III. 8.

For Jeruſalem is ruin'd, and Judah is fallen, becauſe their Tongue and their Doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.

SUCH is the Baſeneſs and Malignity of Sin, that while the Sinner has any remains of Reaſon, he cannot but be conſcious of it, and endeavour to hide him-

ſelf in thick Darkneſs, and avoid the Sight of him who *is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity.* Hab. 1. 13.

But ſo groſs is the Stupidity, ſo foolhardy and deſperate is the Preſumption of Men, when they have ſear'd their Conſciences by a continued Courſe of Vice, and confirm'd themſelves in a Habit of Wickedneſs, that *they refuſe to be aſham'd*, and take delight in provoking the Holy Spirit of God, by an open Defiance, and an avow'd Contempt of all Religion.

This was the fatal Height which the Children of *Iſrael* were arriv'd at when *Jeruſalem was ruin'd, and Judah fell.* So *full was the Meaſure of their Iniquities*, that they boaſted of their Shame, and rejoic'd in Offending the divine Majeſty, even that great and glorious God, who had vouchſafed to dwell among them, and manifeſt himſelf by the beautiful Tokens of his Preſence.

When he divided the Sea, and made a Path for them in the Waters, he led them in the Day Time with a Cloud, and all the Night through with a Light of Fire. Pſ. 78. 13, 14.

When *he bow'd the Heavens, and came down* to deliver the Law, *the Sight of his Glory was like devouring Fire on the Top of the Mount, in the Eyes of the Children of Iſrael.* Ex. 24. 17

When *the Tabernacle was finiſh'd, Moſes was not able to enter into the Tent of the Congregation, becauſe the Cloud abode thereon, and the Glory of the Lord fill'd the Tabernacle.* Ex. 40. 35

And when *Solomon had built an Houſe of Habi-*

2Chron. 7. 2,3. *Habitation for him, and a Place for his Dwelling*, ſuch was the Brightneſs of *his Glory, which fill'd the Houſe, that the Prieſts could not enter: And when all the Children of Iſrael ſaw how the Fire came down, and the Glory of the Lord upon the Houſe, they bow'd themſelves with their Faces to the Ground and worſhip'd.*

But though he had been thus remarkably preſent with them, and had caus'd his Power and Goodneſs to paſs before them, yet they forgot God their Almighty Protector, and Pſal. 10.4. *he was not in all their Thoughts:* Or rather ſo ungrateful were they, that they triumph'd in the Commiſſion of thoſe Things which were moſt diſpleaſing to him, and labour'd to kindle his Anger, by the moſt provoking Abominations.

Their Tongue was made the Inſtrument Pſal. 64. 3. of the moſt impudent Profaneneſs, *and ſhot forth its poiſonous Arrows, even bitter Words, againſt God.* And they ſtudied to offend him by choſen Inſtances of the moſt daring Wickedneſs, and contriv'd to ſhew their Contempt of him, by deliberate Impiety. They brought the worſt of Actions into publick View, into *the Sight of the Sun*; and were obſtinately reſolv'd to compel him to execute Vengeance, and would not be ſatis- Pſ. 78. 39. fied with any meaſure of Guilt, till *he would ſuffer his whole Diſpleaſure to ariſe.*

They continued indeed to acknowledge that there was a God, but it was only that they might Ridicule him, and they hardly ever mention'd his Name, but to Blaſpheme him.

him. And this was the Meaning of all their Actions; he boasted of his Power, let him therefore destroy us, we will allow of no other Proof of it, but our own Destruction.

And when the Beauty of Holiness, and the amiable Tokens of his special Presence, could no longer win upon them, he was at last constrain'd to give them this dreadful Proof of his Power, and he display'd *the Terrors of his Wrath.*

And *Then Jerusalem was ruin'd, and Judah fell, because their Tongue and their Doings were against the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.*

And their Case is an Admonition to us, and I wish that it were duly regarded. Tho' we are not yet brought to utter Ruin, and our Condition is in this respect different from theirs, yet *it is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consum'd* ; for our Guilt is equal, and in the Height of our Transgressions we exactly resemble them. Our Tongue and our Doings are against the Lord, and it is the assiduous Endeavour, the restless Ambition of this Age and Nation *to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.* Lam 3.22

That we may yet behold our Danger, let us consider,

First, What is meant by *the Eyes of his Glory.* And,

Secondly, The heinous Guilt and pernicious Consequences of those Words and Actions

Actions which *provoke the Eyes of his Glory.*

And *Firſt*, By theſe are meant, that infinite Majeſty *which fills the Heavens*, and has from Time to Time been imperfectly manifeſted here on Earth; that tranſcendent Glory which the Wicked will be unable to behold without Confuſion and Aſtoniſhment, which even the Righteous are as yet incapable of bearing in its full Brightneſs, and in the Enjoyment of which their future Happineſs will for ever conſiſt.

1 *Tim.* 6. 15, 16. *The Bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, dwelleth in the Light which no Man can approach unto.*

In the Viſion that was vouchſafed to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *The Lord* appear'd *ſitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and his Train fill'd the Temple, and the Seraphims that* attended upon him, the Miniſters of the Heavenly Iſa. 6. 1, 2. Court, *cover'd their Faces with their Wings*, as if they were aſham'd to look towards the Beams of his Majeſty.

And in *Daniel*'s Prophetick View of the aweful Solemnities of the Day of Judgment,

Dan. 7. 9. 10. *The Ancient of Days did ſit, whoſe Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like the pure Wool. His Throne was like the fiery Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire. A fiery Stream iſſued, and came forth from before him: Thouſand Thouſands miniſter'd unto him, and ten Thouſand times ten Thouſand ſtood before him.*

Thrones

Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers are caſt down and abaſh'd at the Sight of him. How then can ſinful Man endure to enter into his Preſence?

Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not, yea the Stars are not pure in his Sight. How much leſs, Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm? Job 25. 5, 6.

When Jacob awak'd out of Sleep, after that the God of his Fathers had condeſcended to talk with him, and the Holy *Angels had aſcended and deſcended upon the Ladder, that was ſet upon the Earth, the Top of which reach'd to Heaven.* Gen. 28. This wonderful Appearance left ſuch an Impreſſion upon the Patriarch's Mind, that *he was afraid, and ſaid, How dreadful is this Place! This is none other but the Houſe of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.*

When the People of Iſrael ſaw the Thundrings and the Lightnings, and the Noiſe of the Trumpet, and the Mountains ſmoaking, at the Delivery of the Law, *They remov'd and ſtood afar off; and they ſaid unto Moſes, ſpeak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die.* Ex. 20. 18, 19.

When *God commanded Moſes and Aaron, and the Elders of Iſrael to come up to him and worſhip afar off, they ſaw the God of Iſrael; and there was under his Feet a pav'd Work of a Sapphire Stone, and as it were the Body of Heaven in his Clearneſs.* Ex. 24. 10.

And when *Moſes beſought him to ſhew him his Glory, he ſaid, I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee. Thou canſt not ſee my Face,* Ex 33. 18, 19 22.

for

for there ſhall no Man ſee me and live. While my Glory paſſeth by, I will put thee in a Clift of the Rock, and I will cover thee with my Hand, while I paſs by.

So merciful was he to his faithful Servant, that he would only ſuffer him to *ſee his Back-*
v. 23. *parts.* Such is the Majeſty of God, and ſuch the Frailty of human Nature in this State of Corruption, that he could not *ſee him Face to Face.*

When the preſumptuous Followers of
Num. 16. *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, offer'd Incenſe*
35. with unhallowed Hands, *There came out a Fire from the Lord, and conſum'd the two hundred and fifty Men that offer'd Incenſe.*

How great and terrible is our God! *He*
Hab 3. 5. *is a conſuming Fire. Before him goes the Peſtilence, and burning Coals go forth at his Feet.*

When the Son of God took upon him the Veil of human Fleſh, and ſent an Angel to proclaim his Birth to the humble Shepherds,
Luke 2. 9. *they were ſore afraid at* the ſurprizing View *of the Glory of the Lord, that ſhone round about them.*

Luk 9. 29. When *the Faſhion of his Countenance was alter'd upon the Mount, and his Raiment was white and gliſtring,* they that ſaw his Glory were ſo tranſported with it, that *Peter ſaid* unto Jeſus, *Maſter it is good for us to be here.* He wanted nothing more to compleat his Happineſs, for he was perſwaded that Heaven and God were there. In the Morning of his Reſurrection, *the Angel of the Lord that deſcended from Heaven,* to publiſh that mighty Work,

Work, was *cloath'd with Majeſty*, ſo terribly beautiful, *that for fear of him the Keepers did ſhake, and became as dead Men. His Countenance was like Lightning, and his Raiment white as Snow.* Mat. 28 2, 3, 4.

And at the Converſion of St. *Paul*, *as he went to Damaſcus, he ſaw in the Way a Light from Heaven, above the Brightneſs of the Sun, ſhining round about him, and them that journey'd with him.* Acts 26. 13

When the Prophet deſcribes the future Glory of Chriſt's Kingdom, and the Happineſs of his Church, he ſays, *The Sun ſhall be no more thy Light by Day, neither for Brightneſs ſhall the Moon give Light unto thee; but the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting Light, and thy God thy Glory.* Iſa. 60. 19.

And when *the Angel ſhew'd St.* John *that great City, the holy Jeruſalem, it had the Glory of the Lord, and her Light was like unto a Stone moſt precious, even like a Jaſper-ſtone, clear as Chryſtal, and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to ſhine in it; for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* Rev. 21. 11. 23.

It is foretold by *Iſaiah*, that *the lofty Looks of Man ſhall be humbled, and the Haughtineſs of Men ſhall be bow'd down in the dreadful Day of Judgment. And they ſhall go into the Clefts of the Rocks, and into the Tops of the ragged Rocks, for Fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of his Majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth.* Iſ. 2. 11. 21

And accordingly their Fear and Conſter-
Rev. 6. 15, 16, 17. nation is repreſented to St. *John*. *The Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bond-man, and every Free-man hid themſelves, in the Dens and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and ſaid to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb. For the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?*

Thus when *God ariſes, his Enemies will be*
Pſ. 65. 1, 2. *ſcatter'd, and they that hate him, will flee before him. As Smoak is driven away, ſo he will drive them away; as Wax melteth before the Fire, ſo ſhall the Wicked periſh at the Preſence of God.*

He, even he, is to be fear'd; and who may
Pſal. 76. 7. *ſtand in his Sight, when he is Angry?* It therefore highly concerns us to conſider,

Secondly, The heinous Guilt, and pernicious Conſequences of thoſe Words and Actions that *provoke the Eyes of his Glory*.

Sin in general is *againſt the Lord*, and contrary to his pure and holy Nature. And by every Act of Wickedneſs we ſet our ſelves at Enmity with him, and provoke the divine Majeſty. But there are different Degrees of Guilt; and, as ſome Sins riſe very far above others, ſo the very ſame Actions may be attended with a Variety of Circumſtances that will enlarge or extenuate them. And while one Man falls into Sin by Inadverten-

cy

cy and Surprize, becauſe he did not conſider, or was entirely, or in a great meaſure, ignorant of the heinous Nature of the Offence, others may go on wilfully to the Commiſſion of it, with an obſtinate Reſolution of neglecting the cleareſt Light, and the plaineſt Conviction, and with a fix'd Purpoſe of doing the utmoſt Prejudice to Religion, and caſting the vileſt Diſhonour upon the Holy Name of God.

And while ſome are heartily ſorry for their Crimes, and aſham'd to appear before the Eye of the World, others may triumph in their Baſeneſs, look with Complacency and Pride upon the Aggravations of their Faults, and value themſelves for attaining to theſe admir'd Accompliſhments, theſe diſtinguiſhing Faſhions of the Age. And *the Doings* of theſe Men, are in a moſt eminent and eſpecial manner *againſt the Lord.* They expreſs an open Defiance of the glaring Light of *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, and they bear all the Marks of that amazing Guilt, which *provokes the Eyes of his Glory.*

Hypocriſy indeed is highly injurious to the Divine Attributes, and an abſurd Attempt to impoſe upon infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom, and is therefore juſtly odious to God and Men. But yet ſomething may be alledg'd in behalf of this Abomination, and it may hope to cover it ſelf with the Shadow of an Excuſe; for it acknowledges the Baſeneſs of Sin, in that it endeavours to conceal it from the Eyes of the Almighty,

and it paſſes this Cenſure upon Iniquity, that it is too bad to be expos'd to publick View. It puts on the Appearance of Modeſty, and would borrow the Credit of Religion. And though we cannot but condemn it for being worſe than it pretends to be; yet we muſt allow, that it pays a Deference to real Goodneſs, by pretending to be better than it is.

And how Scandalous ſoever it may be, to carry on a villainous Deſign under the Cloak of Righteouſneſs; yet barefac'd Impiety, and open Irreligion, confident Profaneneſs, and daring Blaſphemy, ſeem to be attended with greater Aggravations, and to be more exceedingly Sinful.

For Men cannot arrive at theſe conſummate Inſtances of Wickedneſs, without conquering all Tenderneſs of Nature, and Senſe of Shame; without over-ruling the plaineſt Dictates of Conſcience, and the loudeſt Remonſtrances of Reaſon; and without ſilencing the Fears of a great and terrible God, and bidding Defiance to Omnipotent Vengeance.

Thoſe accurſed Wretches, that delight in ſuch Provocations as theſe, Charge on deſperately againſt *the Terrors of the Lord*, importunately call for the ſevereſt Expreſſions of his fiery Indignation, and inſolently bid him do his Worſt.

And here I cannot but mention ſome of thoſe Sins that are moſt eſpecially *againſt the Lord*, and *provoke the Eyes of his Glory*, and are yet the prevailing Sins of this unhappy Nation.

And

And the first and most obvious of these, are common Swearing and Cursing; Vices that have no Temptation, either of Pleasure, Profit, or Honour, to recommend them; that are dreadful to all that have any Regard to God; that are as contrary to Decency as to Religion, and entirely void of good Sense, good Manners, and good Nature.

But these hideous Vices are grown familiar to almost every Rank of Men; are daily cultivated by those that pretend to give Law and Example to the rest of Mankind; and are diligently learn'd, and eagerly embrac'd, by those mean, obsequious Wretches, that study to gain their Favour by a base Imitation.

The Name of God, that awful Name, which implies every thing that is *Great, Wonderful, and Holy*, is made the Subject of every wanton Tongue, and serves to fill up the empty Spaces of Idle, Lewd, Profane Discourse. And the God of Truth and Justice is summon'd to Witness to every Trifle, and every Falshood.

And even in the solemn Courts, that ought to represent the dread Tribunal, an Oath, that sacred Confirmation of our Word, is expos'd to Sale, and freely prostituted to any one that bids at the highest Rate.

This Ludicrous Appeal to God, this treacherous Prevarication with infinite Wisdom, can be resolv'd into nothing, but desperate Rashness, and flagrant Impiety. For it puts the Souls of Men upon the most dan-

gerous Iſſue; and by calling upon God to atteſt the Truth of a Falſhood, it demands the dreadful Teſtimonies of his Vengeance, and as it were compells him to vindicate himſelf, by breaking forth with all the Tokens of his Diſpleaſure.

Weak, helpleſs Man, is afraid of every little deſpicable Evil, and ſtarts at the Shadow of worldly Dangers; and yet he defies the Curſes of God, and is ſo Mad, as to deſire Damnation. This may be thought impoſſible, but yet it is the natural Interpretation of wilful Perjury.

And it will the leſs ſurprize us, if we conſider, how frequently the moſt horrid Imprecations are pronounc'd by the Mouths of Men, and how often they wiſh that the worſt of Calamities may fall upon themſelves and others; and this not only in a ſudden Fit of Paſſion, when their Thoughts are wrought up into a Tumult, and they have no *watch* at all *over the Door of their Lips*; but even upon ſet Deſigns, and after long Deliberation.

And there are ſuch abandon'd Creatures, as ſtudy to render their Curſes as heavy as they can; charge them with the moſt bitter Malice, and with every Expreſſion of Hatred, and contrive to make a Form of Imprecation, full of every Evil that is ſhocking to human Nature.

When the Children of *Iſrael* were ſtrook with Fear and Amazement, becauſe *the Lord had ſhewn them his Glory, and his Greatneſs,*

and

and they had heard his Voice out of the midſt of the Fire; and they intreated *Moſes* to paſs between God and them, *the Lord ſaid unto him, I have heard the Voice of the Words of this People, and they have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken. O that there were ſuch an Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always.* So juſt and reaſonable is the Fear of God, that he openly approv'd of their Dread and Aſtoniſhment. Deuter. 5.

And when he denounc'd his Curſes againſt the Diſobedient, he declar'd, that *he would do thoſe things, at which both the Ears of every one that heard them ſhould tingle.* 1Sa. 3. 11.

But Men have now worn away the Senſe of theſe Evils, and repeat the Mention of them, not only with Indifference, but with Pleaſure, with Triumph. And ſuch are the direful Effects of Party-Rage, ſo great is the Decay of Chriſtian Charity, that they delight to wiſh, that all Evil and Miſchief, Lightning and Tempeſt, Plague, Peſtilence and Famine, Battle and Murder, and ſudden Death, the Wrath of God, and everlaſting Damnation, may befall their Enemies.

And (which is yet more unaccountable) there are ſuch miſtaken Fools, as value theſe extravagant Inſtances of Fanatick Fury, as if they were Proofs of their Zeal for God, and their tender Concern for the pureſt Religion. But, *Oh! Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the Streets of Aſhkelon!* 2 Sam. 1. 20.

Another crying Sin, that provokes the Divine Glory, is impudent Profaneneſs; a

Sin that boaſts of the Number, the Greatneſs, the Authority of its Patrons; that is receiv'd as the moſt engaging Entertainment of Company; that paſſes for the Standard of Wit, and even for the moſt diſtinguiſhing Mark of improv'd Reaſon.

But give me leave to ſay, that the wild, incoherent Diſcourſe of Mad-men, and the idle, impertinent Dreams of the Man that lies upon the Bed of Sickneſs, are infinitely preferable to it, and have a far better Title to Credit and Reputation.

For wherein does its Excellence conſiſt? Is there any Wiſdom, or Wit, or Courage in Ridiculing that perfect Being, whom all Ages and Nations have Worſhip'd and Ador'd, before whom the Angels proſtrate themſelves with the loweſt Reverence, and before whom *the Devils tremble?*

How can we admire them that trample upon the Honour of that good and powerful God, who gave them their Life, *with the Breath of his Mouth*, and can as eaſily command them into Deſtruction?

Is it not Irrational, as well as Impious, to treat the Majeſty of God worſe than the moſt ſtupid Idiot, or the Beaſts that periſh, or the Stocks and Stones?

There have been in the ſeveral Ages of the World, ſome Abandon'd, Sinful Creatures, that have endeavour'd to Laugh away the Fears of God, and overcome the Cries of Conſcience, by confident Raillery.

But

But they have now gone even beyond themſelves, and caſt forth their Venom againſt the Almighty, as if they hated him with the moſt inveterate Hatred, and eſteem'd him as the moſt Ridiculous, the moſt Deſpicable, the moſt Odious of Beings.

And when we conſider how much this execrable Cuſtom prevails, and how much it is encourag'd, one might almoſt imagine, that they thought it Meritorious to load him with Contempt, and concluded it to be the Intereſt of Mankind, to Laugh him out of the World.

The barbarous Indians Worſhip even the Devil, that he may not hurt them; but theſe more brutiſh Wretches, rejoice in *Crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to an open Shame*, who gives them every thing that is Good, and is able to puniſh them with every thing that is Evil. *Heb.* 6. 6.

But ſince they are given up to the groſſeſt Folly, let us leave them to enjoy (if they can enjoy) their admir'd Wit. For they have no other Pretenſions to it, no other Way to acquire their vain Reputation, but *Blaſpheming the Living God.*

And if there is occaſion to mention any thing more, let me mention the Guilt of thoſe that are ambitious of being ſingularly Sinful, that glory in reaching the utmoſt Lengths of Iniquity, and are induſtrious to ſhew themſelves the Children of the Devil.

It is ſad and ungrateful to conſider, how eagerly the Youth of this Nation are caught up,

up by the Factors for Vice, how carefully they are inſtructed in all the Meaſures of Wickedneſs, and how ſoon they are taught, to renounce the Principles of their Forefathers, to pluck up the good Seeds of their Education, and to aſpire to conſummate Villany.

That the Thoughts of theſe Things may make a juſt Impreſſion upon us, Let us conſider the Folly and Ingratitude of *provoking the Eyes of that Glory*, from whoſe imperfect Beams, we derive our preſent Life, and all the Comforts of it, and from the perfect Manifeſtation of which, we may receive an Eternity of Bliſs.

Let us remember the Terrors of the Divine Majeſty, which diſplay'd themſelves, when God came down to deliver his Law; And, Let us think how much more terrible he will appear, when he comes to puniſh us for the Breach of it.

And, Let us with Faith *behold him coming with Ten Thouſands of his Saints, to execute*
Jude 15. *Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly Deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt him.*

2Pet.3.10 *Then the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth alſo and the Works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.*

And then the *Scoffers* ſhall no longer *ſay,*
2Pet.3. 4. *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?*

Nathan's

Nathan's *Application to* David.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. MARY's.

2 SAM. XIII. 7.

Thou art the Man.

THE Train of Sins which gave occaſion to this Reproof, the Nature of the Reproof it ſelf, and the Effect which it wrought upon the Perſon reprov'd, are as remarkable as any Part of the Holy Scripture, and highly deſerve our ſerious Conſideration.

So prone is even the Juſt Man to fall, that *David*, an eminent and diſtinguiſh'd Example of Righteouſneſs, fell into the fouleſt

and moſt ſhameful Wickedneſs, and continued under the Guilt of repeated Tranſgreſſions.

While he was *walking upon the Roof of his Houſe*, he ſaw *Bathſheba, the beautiful Wife of Uriah*, and was ſtruck with the fatally-pleaſing Object; and his Reaſon and Conſcience being lull'd aſleep, he yielded to the flattering Temptation, and debas'd himſelf by the Enjoyment of his Luſt.

Nor did he ſtop here, but having once violated his Innocence, he ſuffer'd it to be
Pſ. 19. 13. *laid waſt*, by a yet more heinous Sin that *got the Dominion over him.*

He not only endeavour'd to repeat the vicious Enjoyment, but to ſecure the Continu-
Pſa. 52. 8. ance of it, and *ſtrengthen himſelf in his Wickedneſs.* He ſent for *Uriah the Hittite*, the unhappy Obſtacle that ſtood in his Way, reſolving to accompliſh his Death.

And when he came to the Palace of the King, he receiv'd him with the endearing Expreſſions of pretended Kindneſs, and all the ſmiling Treachery of a Court.

Uriah declin'd his extraordinary Favours with the greateſt Modeſty and Deference, and was unwilling to go to his Houſe and
2 Sam. 11. *fare delicately, while the Ark, and Iſrael, and*
11. *Judah abode in Tents, and the Servants of his Lord were encamp'd in the open Fields.*

Such Modeſty as this, one might have thought, would have chang'd the Purpoſe of the King, and kindled ſome Repenting in his Heart. But he was ſtill bent on his Deſtruction,

ſtruction, and made him, in ſome meaſure, the Inſtrument of it.

For *he wrote a Letter to Joab, and ſent it by the Hand of Uriah, and he wrote in the Letter, ſaying, Set ye Uriah in the Forefront of the hotteſt Battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be ſmitten and die.* v. 14, 15.

A Commiſſion fraught with Blood and Cruelty, and as baſe a Device as ever was contriv'd by the moſt artful and exquiſite Villany.

The Innocent, the Brave, the Faithful *Uriah* goes forth (as he imagines) to fight in the Defence of his Prince and Country; but in reality, to be deſerted by a perfidious Army, and fall a Sacrifice to the imperious Demands of *David*'s Luſt.

And when the agreeable Meſſage was brought, that *Uriah was dead*, and the Days of Mourning were paſt, *David ſent for Bath-ſheba to his Houſe, and ſhe became his Wife.* 2 Sam. 11. 27.

Behold the amazing Progreſs and Conſummation of his Guilt! and behold a Sinner cover'd with Vice, and (as we might juſtly fear) ripe for Deſtruction!

But now the Mercy of God look'd down upon him, and *pluck'd him as a Firebrand out of the Fire. God ſent down from on high to fetch him* back to himſelf, *and take him out of* the Depths of Sin. *He deliver'd him from his ſtrongeſt Enemy, and from them which hated him; for, alas, they had been too mighty for him. He brought him forth into a Place of Liberty; he brought him forth, even becauſe he had a Favour unto him.* Pſ. 18. 16, 17. 19.

Nathan,

Nathan, the Meſſenger of the moſt high God, was ſent to repreſent his Caſe, and deſcribe the Meaſure of his Guilt. And purſuant to his important Commiſſion, he ſet before him the barbarous Oppreſſion of a great rich Man, and an inhuman Injury done by him to his poor helpleſs Neighbour.

And when *David* heard the ſurprizing Story, he thought it concern'd an unknown Perſon: A Perſon unknown, becauſe, alas, he was unknown to Himſelf!

His Indignation immediately aroſe, and he expreſſed his juſt Reſentment of the unnatural Crime. *His Anger was greatly kindled againſt the Man; and he ſaid, as the Lord liveth, the Man that hath done this thing, ſhall ſurely die, becauſe he had no Pity.*

2 *Sam.* 12. 5,6.

Having thus unawares paſs'd Sentence upon himſelf, and ſhewn the utmoſt Abhorrence of his Baſeneſs, the Prophet prick'd him to the Heart with his own Reflections, and brought them home to him with, *Thou art the Man.*

The once harden'd Sinner receives the deepeſt Impreſſion from theſe powerful Words, and ſhakes off the Sleep of Sin. And happy, unſpeakably happy, is *David*, in that *he lifts up his Eyes* before he is *in Flames.*

He confeſſes his Crime with a perfect Senſe of the Heinouſneſs of it; and as ſoon as he acknowledges his *Sin againſt the Lord*, the Prophet gives him this welcome Aſſurance, *The Lord alſo hath put away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not Die.*

verſe 13.

That

That we may make a proper Uſe of this Example, it will be neceſſary to form,

Firſt, A full and perfect Notion of the Baſeneſs and Heinouſneſs of Sin in general. And,

Secondly, Of our own particular Sins. And then,

Thirdly, To bring all our Cenſures home, and confine them to our ſelves, till we utterly abhor and forſake our Vices.

And *Firſt*, We are are to form a full and perfect Notion of the Baſeneſs and Heinouſneſs of Sin in general.

This is abſolutely neceſſary to be done before we can conceive a juſt Indignation againſt thoſe particular Sins, that have taken Poſſeſſion of our Boſom, and gotten an Aſcendant over us.

And we ſhall behold the Evil of Sin in its exact Proportion, if we conſider it as injurious to God, our Neighbour, and our Selves. With Reſpect to God, it is offenſive to a Being of infinite Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Holineſs, and Juſtice.

He is the Fountain and Fulneſs of Goodneſs. All the Portions of it that are ſcatter'd amongſt an innumerable Variety of Creatures, are deriv'd from him, and are but the imperfect Beams that flow from his amiable Perfection. He has diſplayed it in this lower World, ever ſince he *laid the Foundations of it*; and he will manifeſt it more

more and more till this wonderful Building is diſſolved.

And though *the Heavens and the Earth ſhall periſh*, and Time it ſelf ſhall come to an End, this glorious Attribute will have no Bounds or Period, but extend it ſelf as far as his Preſence, which is infinite, and reach through all the Ages of Eternity, which can never be meaſur'd.

And therefore to provoke a Being that is abſolutely Good in himſelf, and perpetually delights in doing Good, which he does moſt eſpecially to Man: This carries ſomething ſo ſhocking and horrid in its Nature, that if we think at all, we muſt tremble at the Thoughts of it. It bears all the Marks of the moſt odious and abominable Object, and provokes every Paſſion of our Mind to join in its Condemnation. It is cover'd with the *Blackneſs* and *Darkneſs* of Ingratitude, and to give the greateſt *Blackneſs* to its *Darkneſs*, it is the very worſt Kind of Ingratitude.

When we behold a good Man that is tender of his Fellow-Creatures, and abſtains from the leaſt Appearance of an Injury, we cannot but highly regard and eſteem him.

When we find that he not only avoids the Approaches of Evil, but is alſo conſtantly employ'd in doing Good, and makes it *his Meat and Drink*, his Pleaſure and Delight, to relieve the Poor, to protect the Fatherleſs, and ſupport the Widow: His Goodneſs inclines us to think his Perſon ſacred, and ren-

renders us afraid to grieve or offend him. And if at any Time we are going to form a Purpoſe prejudicial to him, a ſudden Dread gives a Check to the Conception, and all that is Human in our Breaſts, riſes up immediately, and bids us *have nothing to do with that Good Man.*

And if we are conſtrain'd to pay this Reſpect to the Image of God, how much more ought we to pay it to God Himſelf, who is the Head-ſpring of all thoſe Virtues, that demand the Veneration of Mankind, and in whoſe Hand, the beſt of Men are but Inſtruments that work his Pleaſure, and convey his Benefits to his Creatures?

And if it is unnatural to Injure thoſe who act in his Stead, how much more unnatural is it, to *put him to Grief*, who gives us all the Bleſſings of this mortal Life, and who made us Immortal, that he might make us Happy to all Eternity?

We may take another View of the Baſeneſs of Sin, as it is contrary to his Wiſdom. And we ſhall certainly hate and abhor it in this View, if we have any Senſe of the Dignity of our Nature, any Value for the better Part of our ſelves.

For God created us *after his own Likeneſs*, and plac'd us but *a little lower than the Angels*, capable of attaining to a nearer Reſemblance of him, and of riſing ſtill higher, till we are *equal to the Angels of God.*

But Sin debaſes and degrades us, blots out the Lines of the Divine Image, and more

than levels us with *the Beaſts that periſh.*

Every Inſtance of it is Folly even in our own Sight, and much more in the Sight of him, who *charges* the moſt Perfect of his Creatures with a Defect of Wiſdom.

The oftner we repeat it, ſo much the more unlike we are to Him; and every Degree of Guilt is a freſh and palpable Proof of Folly. Whatſoever is contrary to the Divine Wiſdom, is alſo contrary to human Reaſon; and whatſoever is unreaſonable, creates an uneaſy Reflection in the Perſon that commits it. If we are truly ſenſible of it, we cannot but be miſerable; and if we are not truly ſenſible of it, we are yet more miſerable, becauſe we have Sinn'd our ſelves into a State of *Thick Darkneſs*, and are ſo widely diſtant from the God of Wiſdom.

And the ſame loathſom Evil is utterly diſagreeable to his unſpotted Holineſs. The leaſt Impurity is diſcern'd and abhorr'd by his jealous Eye, and if he would *be extreme* to puniſh what we have done amiſs, he might puniſh us even for the ſmalleſt Duſt of our Corruption.

Our beſt Actions ſtand in need of his Par-
*Iſa.*64. 6. don, *for we are all as an unclean Thing before him, and all our Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags.*

Behold he putteth no truſt in his Saints, yea,
Job 15. 15, 16. *the Heavens are not clean in his Sight; how much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh Iniquity like Water?*

And

And if our leſſer Spots are diſagreeable to him, with what Diſpleaſure muſt he obſerve our groſſer Stains, and thoſe Sins that are of the deepeſt Dye?

Let us conſider what an Appearance they make before him. Such is their Vileneſs, that they cannot bear our own Examination, or ſtand the Teſt of our impartial Thoughts. We are forc'd to withdraw our Minds from attending to them, and to be abſent as much as we can, while we commit them. And when the Commiſſion is paſt, we endeavour to draw the Veil of Forgetfulneſs over them, and would gladly bury them in Darkneſs for ever.

The Accomplices in Guilt are afraid of betraying their Bluſhes to each other, and if they lift up their Eyes in the midſt of a ſinful Action, they look with Fear and Suſpicion, conſcious of their own Shame, and dreading mutual Contempt.

The unexpected Sight of a good Man does yet more diſturb them. Before he can *ſpeak with his Tongue*, they ſeem to be pierc'd with his Reproofs, and prevent his earlieſt Applications to them, with the Words of *Ahab*, *haſt thou found me, O mine Enemy?* 1 *Kings* 21. 20.

So baſe is Sin, in the Opinion of the Sinner himſelf, ſo ugly does it appear when none but the Partaker of his Guilt beholds it, and ſo much more ugly when the righteous Man finds him out! He is then ſurpriz'd as *the Keepers* were, who *ſhook and became as dead Men, when the Angel of the Lord deſcended* Mat. 28. 2. 4.

from Heaven to proclaim our Saviour's Reſurrection.

Hence we may form an imperfect Draught of Sin, as it appears to him, who ſees it within and without, and has a naked View of all its Horrors, from its firſt Conception, till *it*
Jam. 1. 15. *is finiſh'd and brings forth Death.*

Which leads to another Conſideration of it, as it offends his Juſtice. Our great Lawgiver is infinitely Juſt; his Nature is the perfect Pattern of Truth and Equity, and his Will the certain, unalterable Meaſure of Right and Wrong. He has not given us Laws, barely to exerciſe his Authority, or manifeſt his Power, but has vouchſafed us a Copy of Himſelf, to direct us in the Way to Happineſs, and has interwoven our Intereſt with our Duty.

His Laws were good in themſelves from all Eternity, flowing from the eſſential Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, and implanted in the Nature of Man at his Creation.

Every Sin is a Deviation from them, ſtill winding farther into the Paths of Error, and growing crooked like the Folds of the Serpent.

And if the judicious Artiſt can hardly endure the Sight of a Flaw in his Building; if the exact, obſerving Eye is offended at beholding a Line irregularly drawn; and if the Ear of the skilful Muſician is in an Inſtant grated with the harſh, unpleaſant Sounds of an Inſtrument that is out of Tune; can we imagine that a God of perfect Juſtice

can

can bear with our Actions, that wander from the ſure, never-failing Rules of our Duty, and are contrary to the Wiſdom of God, and the Reaſon of Man?

No, aſſuredly, he hates them with an utter Hatred, and will one Day break forth with all the Severity of Diſpleaſure.

He denounc'd his Threatnings with a juſt Regard to the Evil of Sin, and how dreadful ſoever they are, they are but proportion'd to the Heinouſneſs of it. They are grounded on undeniable Reaſon, and they will not be executed upon us, till he has us'd all the means of reclaiming us, but in vain. And when *the Meaſure of our Guilt is full*, and we are ripe for Vengeance, he will perform *his ſtrange Work*, and be *terrible in his Doings towards us. Till Heaven and Earth paſs, one Jot or one Tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from his Law.* And even when Heaven and Earth are paſs'd away, his Threatnings ſhall continue in their full Force, and never be abated. Mat. 5. 18.

Having conſider'd the Baſeneſs and Heinouſneſs of Sin, with reſpect to God, we are now to conſider it as it relates to our Neighbour.

And we may not improperly divide it, into ſecret Injuſtice, and open Oppreſſion; Vices nearly allied, how much ſoever they may ſeem to differ from one another. For the Man that injures his Neighbour ſecretly, would openly trample upon him, were it in his Power; and he that exerciſes himſelf in

the arbitrary Acts of Oppreſſion, would ſtoop to the cloſer Artifices of Villany, did not his Power render it unneceſſary.

Let any one impartially reflect, and he will immediately acknowledge the Baſeneſs of Fraud and Treachery. It frequently indeed puts on the ſpecious Names of Wiſdom and Policy; and *the Children of this World* admire themſelves for their ſhrewd, dexterous Conduct.

But let them remember, that their artful Meaſures, and crafty Schemes, are the Offſpring of him who is *the Father of Lies*; and they are no longer uſeful and effectual, than while they are conceal'd by *the Prince of Darkneſs*.

And it is not probable they ſhould be long conceal'd, ſince their fraudulent Brethren are perpetually at Work, in the ſame *Depths of Satan*, and may either by Deſign or Accident meet with them in their beloved hiding Places, and unexpectedly countermine them.

And there is not a more deſpicable, uſeleſs Wretch, than a detected Villain. He is unable to do Good, and (which is infinitely worſe in his Account) he is incapable of doing Miſchief.

The Perſons whom the Deceitful betray and injure, render their Proceedings yet more Scandalous. For they are either the weak and unwary, or the plain honeſt Man. And is it a Proof of Wiſdom to deceive the weak and unwary? Is there any Glory in impoſing upon an honeſt Man? Their

Their Guilt is no leſs, if they blaſt their Neighbour's Fame, than if they injure him in his Perſon and Fortune. Nay, it is rather greater, for a Wound in his Body may hurt no one but himſelf, and a Loſs in his Fortune may be repair'd; but the Loſs of his good Name may affect the lateſt Poſterity: An unjuſt Cenſure ſtrikes at the very Root, and too often entails it ſelf upon a Family, and goes down from Generation to Generation.

As to Oppreſſion, it implies the Uſe of Power, and it is certainly the worſt abuſe of it. For it might be employ'd to the nobleſt Purpoſes, and raiſe a Man to the neareſt Reſemblance of the Almighty, who exerciſes his Power in doing Good.

But the Oppreſſor applies it to the moſt unnatural, barbarous Uſes, to *grind the Poor*, who are unable to contend with him; or in other Words, to trample upon a Worm, to *break a Leaf driven to and fro, and to purſue the dry Stubble.* Job 13. 25.

He cauſes the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the Cold. They are wet with the Showers of the Mountains, and embrace the Rock for want of Shelter. He plucks the Fatherleſs from the Breaſt, and takes a Pledge from the Poor. Job 24. 7, 8, 9.

The Parable of *Nathan* gives us a full Deſcription of him. *There were two Men in one City, the one Rich, and the other Poor. The Rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds. But the Poor Man had nothing, ſave one little* 2 Sam. 12. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Ew-lamb, which he had bought and nouriſh'd up: and it grew up together with him, and with his Children; it did eat of his own Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and lay in his Boſom, and was unto him as a Daughter. And there came a Traveller to the Rich Man, and he ſpar'd to take of his own Flock, and of his own Herd, to dreſs for the Way-faring Man, that was come unto him, but took the Poor Man's Lamb, and dreſs'd it for the Man that was come to him.

Is not our *Anger greatly kindled againſt him*, as ſoon as we hear of this inhuman Inſtance of Oppreſſion? And are not we ready to ſay with *David*, *As the Lord liveth, the Man that* verſe 5. *hath done this thing ſhall ſurely die.*

But we ſhall conceive a yet greater Abhorrence of Sin, if we conſider it, as Injurious to our ſelves.

It is this that extinguiſhes that glorious Lamp, our Reaſon; violates that faithful Friend, our Conſcience, perverts and diſtorts our Will, and delivers up the Government of our Minds, to thoſe violent Paſſions and Affections that delight only in Anarchy and Confuſion.

It overturns the Order in which we were created, lays our Immortal Faculties on a Level with the Duſt, from whence our Bodies were taken, and puts our viler, earthly Part in Poſſeſſion of an uſurp'd Dominion.

It engages us in the Purſuit of improper Pleaſures, devotes us to the Service of a Luſt, which can never ſatisfy us with true Enjoy-

Enjoyment, and withdraws us from thoſe nobler Pleaſures, which alone can yield us true Enjoyment.

It enlarges our Deſires, that we may be ſtill tormented with importunate Demands, receives freſh Inſolence from our Compliance, and the more it is gratified, ſtill the more remote it is from Satisfaction.

It fixes our Thoughts upon This ſhort, uncertain Life, and the ſhorter and more uncertain Pleaſures of the Body; and teaches us to prefer them before the Happineſs of an Immortal Soul, and the Rewards of Eternity.

Such is the Baſeneſs and Heinouſneſs of Sin in general!

But it is neceſſary to conſider,

Secondly, Our own particular Sins.

We cannot abhor the Latter, till we are brought to a juſt Abhorrence of the Former; But we reſt in vain, in a general Notion of Sin, unleſs we apply it to our own Caſe, and draw the Picture for our ſelves: For herein lies the Deceit that caſts a Miſt before us, and flatters us into a falſe Security. We cannot but acknowledge, that Sin is juſtly the Object of Divine Hatred, and no leſs juſtly, the Object of our own. We ſee the Heinouſneſs of it in other Men, but we cannot ſo eaſily ſee it in our Selves. We imagine that we are not Guilty of the ſame Offences, or that there are peculiar Circumſtances

ſtances to mitigate and leſſen our Guilt. We endeavour, to draw up an Excuſe for our favourite Sin, in thoſe ſoftning Words, *Is it not a Little One*? Or, provided we indulge only our prevailing Infirmity, we deſire to compound with God, and offer *Naaman*'s Plea, hoping, *The Lord will pardon us in this Thing.*

2 *Kings* 5. 18.

But, Let us not be thus deceiv'd, for it is hard to confine our ſelves to one ſingle Sin. There is a ſtrange Connection in Wickedneſs, and one Link of the Chain draws on the reſt.

We are perhaps Averſe to This, or That particular Sin, but we know not how ſoon our Averſion may be worn away.

Our favourite Sin may powerfully recommend it, and train us at Length from a ſleight Embrace, to an intimate Familiarity; we may inſenſibly entertain kinder Thoughts of it, for it is natural enough, to eſteem our Friend's Acquaintance.

And farther, It is impoſſible to hate Sin, upon a juſt Foundation, whilſt we retain an Affection for any particular Sin.

This may be more Convenient to us, and another leſs, but we cannot abſtain from either, with a due Regard to the Honour of God, or a perfect Senſe of the Baſeneſs of Sin, unleſs we are reſolv'd to abſtain from Both.

Let not therefore any one ſatisfy Himſelf, becauſe *He is not as other Men are*, while he is only Diſtinguiſh'd from them by his particular Vices.

Let

Let not the Drunkard boaſt of Himſelf, becauſe he is not addicted to Luſt; neither, Let the Man, that is free from Drunkenneſs and Luſt, acquieſce in a vain Opinion of himſelf, if he is poſſeſs'd with Phariſaical Pride, Villainous Cunning, and Diabolical Diſſimulation.

But, Let every Man fairly examine his own State, and all the Circumſtances of his Guilt. Let him conſider the Extent and Influence of it, how many he has Injured by it, how often he has done Violence to his Conſcience, and how often rejected the kind Admonitions of the Holy Spirit, What Mercies he has receiv'd, What Afflictions he has ſuffer'd from the Hand of God, and how little they have avail'd towards his Repentance. And This will Teach us,

Laſtly, To bring all our Cenſures home, and confine them to Our ſelves, till we utterly abhor and forſake our Vices.

The Conduct of our own Lives, is an Affair of ſo much Difficulty, and affords us ſo much Matter for Employment every Day, that if we were reſolved to diſcharge it throughly, we could have no Leiſure to Reflect upon the greater World without us.

And the real Faults of the World are ſo many, and Report and Cenſure repreſents them as ſo many more, that if we pry into the Affairs of Others, we can never have time to look into our Own.

One of theſe muſt be Done, and the other may be very well left Undone; as we can-

cannot ſerve two Maſters, ſo we cannot attend to our own Faults, and thoſe of others; It behoves us therefore to make a right Uſe of our Cenſures.

When we have ſtrain'd our Invention, to aggravate our Neighbour's Guilt, and lay all the odious Colours that Calumny can caſt upon it; when we have deſcrib'd him, as Ungrateful to God, Injurious to his Brother, and even the worſt of Enemies to Himſelf, Let us change our firſt Deſign, and try whether the diſagreeable Character will not ſuit Our ſelves.

It may be, it will ſtare upon us, like a Picture that ſeems to direct its Eyes to every one that looks upon it.

We are perhaps unwilling to open our Breaſts, and ſearch all its Retirements; we may therefore ſee our ſelves by Reflection; and when we have rais'd our Indignation againſt a ſuppos'd Criminal, we may paſs Sentence upon a real one, and give it the utmoſt Force and Sharpneſs with, *Thou art the Man.*

When we judge others, we may eaſily be deceiv'd by falſe Appearances, and our Partiality may pronounce too ſevere a Judgment.

But in our ſelves, we are not liable to be thus Miſtaken; and if we deal faithfully with our Souls, and acknowledge with *David*, that *We have Sinn'd againſt the Lord*, our Conſcience will tell us, in the Words of *Nathan*,

2 *Sam.* 12. 13. *The Lord alſo hath put away your Sin, you ſhall not Die.*

The

The Duty of Forgiving our Enemies, recommended and enforc'd.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex.*

LUKE XI. 4.

Forgive us our Sins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.

THE Crucified Jeſus having made one full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, is gone up on high to the Right-Hand of the Father, to continue his Interceſſion for us; and offer the Incenſe of our Prayers, enforc'd with the infinite Merits of his Precious Death.

But becauſe *we are fooliſh and ignorant, even as a Beaſt before him*, and unable to frame our Petitions aright, therefore in Compaſſion to our Infirmities, he gave us an abſolute Form of Prayer, and taught us to preſent our Petitions at the Throne of Grace, in words that came down from Heaven.

And whatſoever is worthy to be the Object of our Deſires, whether it be the Glory of God, or the Happineſs of Man; the Food that ſuſtains us for a Day, or the Bread that endureth for ever, the Pardon of our Sins, or an everlaſting Reward; a Deliverance from all the Evils, or the Attainment of all the Goods of Time and Eternity; more than we could have preſum'd to deſire, and infinitely more than we can deſerve; all theſe are ſumm'd up, and contained in this comprehenſive Form of Prayer.

Every Petition is of great Importance, but none of greater than the Petition for Forgiveneſs of our Treſpaſſes; and to ſhew the Importance of it; This alone has a Condition annex'd to it.

To promote Peace on Earth: The Father of Mercies is pleas'd to preſcribe the ſame Meaſure to us, as we deſire to receive from him; and to offer Pardon and Peace to his Rebellious Creatures, if they will but vouchſafe to Forgive each other.

Our Treſpaſſes can no more be number'd, than the Hairs of our Head, the Stars of Heaven, or the Sands of the Shore; and the Weight of our Guilt is too heavy to be born

born by the moſt perfect of the Sons of Men. The Pardon that is reach'd out to us, is of the utmoſt Extent, and imports a Deliverance from an Eternity of Miſery. And yet our Compaſſionate Father lays only the light Offences, which our Brethren have committed againſt us, in the Balance with our heinous Tranſgreſſions againſt Himſelf.

The greateſt Injuries, that we can receive from our Enemies, are but *as the light Duſt of the Balance*, and yet Our Forgiveneſs of them, procures the Pardon of our Sins againſt God. The latter are *written with a Pen of Iron*, in the Book of everlaſting Remembrance; and the former ſhould be *written but in Duſt*, or ſcattered upon the Waters; and, yet if we paſs by the One, our offended God will blot out the Other. To be Forgiven of God, is ſo neceſſary to all the Children of *Adam:* And to Forgive our Brethren, is ſo reaſonable a Duty, that we muſt be loſt and abandon'd for ever, if we do not haſten to Forgive, that we may be Forgiven.

To enforce this Duty, I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, That we are not fit to Pray to God.
Secondly, That we renounce his Pardon.
Thirdly, That we mock and prevaricate with Him. And,
Fourthly, That we turn our Prayer into an Imprecation, unleſs we Forgive our Brethren their Treſpaſſes.

And, *Firſt*, That we are not fit to Pray, unleſs

leſs we Forgive our Brethren their Treſpaſſes.

Prayer is to be offered up to God with our whole Heart, and requires all the Warmth and Earneſtneſs of our Paſſions and Affections. Both our Duty and Intereſt oblige us to addreſs our ſelves to him with the cloſeſt Application: And if we conſider the ſubject of our Prayers, at all Times, and eſpecially when we ask for Pardon, we cannot be cold and indifferent, we cannot but be preſſing and importunate, we cannot *ſuffer our Eyes to ſleep, nor our Eyelids to ſlumber, nor the Temples of our Head to take any reſt*, till we have obtained the deſired Bleſſing.

But if we retain an implacable unforgiving Temper; if the Deſtruction of our ſuppoſed Enemy be the Object of our Wiſhes and Deſires; if the violent Flame of Anger, or the ſecret lingering Fire of Malice burn within us, our Devotions will loſe their neceſſary Zeal, and our diſorder'd Minds will leave the Mercy-ſeat to purſue their Revenge, nor can we expect that the Spirit of God ſhould deſcend upon our Sacrifices; or his ſacred Fire come down from Heaven, to ſhew his Acceptance and Approbation, while Anger rages, or Malice lurks within us: There is another Flame that prevails over us, even that which is *Earthly, Senſual, Deviliſh*. The accurſed Spirit poſſeſſes the Heart, and pollutes *the Temple of the Holy-Ghoſt*; And we come in vain to the Altar, till we have cleans'd our Hearts from this

Pollution

Pollution, and compoſed them into a peaceable and friendly Temper. And unleſs we thus qualify our ſelves, we,

Secondly, Renounce God's Pardon. When ſinful Man had loſt the Favour of God, and was condemn'd to Die by a juſt and righteous Sentence, he could not preſume to hope for an Alteration, much leſs could he expect a Repeal of the dreadful Decree; for he had no Merit to procure it, nor could Reaſon find out an Expedient to ſatisfy the Juſtice of God. But had God himſelf declared, that ſuch an Expedient might be found, and open'd *a Door of Hope*, by ſhewing a bare Poſſibility of Forgiveneſs, would not the condemn'd Criminals have ſubmitted to any Terms, and gladly have embraced the Hardeſt that could have been impoſed? And ſurely none more Eaſy cou'd have been impoſed, than mutual Forgiveneſs and Charity to one another. Nay, had not this been required, had we been left to our own Choice, the Principles of Gratitude, and all the Ingenuous Sentiments of Human Nature, muſt have prompted us to Forgive.

When the *Lord Forgave his Servant that owed him ten Thouſand Talents, and was moved with Compaſſion towards him and loos'd him*, tho' he might *have ſold him* into Slavery, *with his Wife and Children, and all that he had, foraſmuch as he had not to pay*; it might be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that the Servant ſhould immediately ſeek for his Fellow-ſervants, and cancel all their Debts, if not only One,

but every One had *ow'd him an Hundred Pence.* Such generous Uſage naturally opens the Heart, and inclines it to gratify it ſelf, by a pleaſing Imitation of it; And had not Truth it ſelf aſſured us of it, and did not Experience daily confirm it, we could hardly think it poſſible, that the Servant ſhould rigidly inſiſt upon *a Debt of an Hundred Pence, and caſt his Fellow-ſervant into* Matth. 18. *Priſon, when he humbly beſought him to have patience with him.* All our Sins are Inſtances of Folly and Ingratitude, but none are more fooliſh and ungrateful, than an obſtinate refuſal to forgive our Brother, when God has made it the Condition of our own Forgiveneſs.

That Infinite Wiſdom ſhould contrive the Means of our Reconciliation; and that Infinite Goodneſs ſhould make an Atonement for us: That the Son of God ſhould be born in the Weakneſs of our Fleſh, and endure the Multitude of our Infirmities: That he ſhould paſs through the Contempt, the Scorn, the Blaſphemies of Men; That he ſhould almoſt ſink under the Weight of our Sorrows in the Garden: That he ſhould ſay, *It is finiſhed*, having paid down the full *Price of our Ranſom*; and yet, that we ſhould render all this ineffectual to our Salvation; That we ſhould ſpurn at Forgiveneſs, and diſdain to be Sav'd; That the only Difficulty ſhould proceed from our Selves; and we ſhould be eternally Miſerable, becauſe we were unnatural, unrelenting, and unmerciful,

tiful, This ſurely is enough to fill the Heavens and the Earth with Aſtoniſhment; and to leave us without Excuſe for ever and ever.

If we hold faſt our Enmity to one another, whilſt God is willing to be at Peace with us, we caſt the vileſt Indignities and Reflections upon him; We leſſen his Honour and magnify our own; We eſteem our Offences againſt him as a thing of Nought, and value the Injuries that are done to us, at the deareſt Rate; as if our Offences againſt God might eaſily be expiated, and the Offences againſt us could admit of no Expiation.

And yet what are the moſt heinous Injuries that we are capable of Receiving? We generally make a wrong Eſtimate of theſe Things, and throw all the Weight we can into our own Scale; we allow nothing for Ignorance, Inadvertency, nor Surprize, but add all the aggravating Circumſtances that we can poſſibly Invent, to enhance our Brother's Tranſgreſſions. But when our Invention or Malice has done its worſt; when we have placed our ſelves in the faireſt View, and repreſented our Adverſary in the blackeſt Colours; yet no real or imaginary Circumſtances can render the Wrongs that we have ſuffer'd of equal Weight or Malignity, with our Guilt towards God.

Is it our Friend that has Injured us? Has he enjoy'd continual Inſtances of our Kindneſs? Have we ſerv'd him in the moſt gene-

rous, diſintereſted manner? And has he given us the baſeſt and moſt diſingenuous Uſage? Has he made the moſt ſhameful Return? And treacherouſly wounded us in the moſt tender Part? Yet has not God been more our Friend? Has he not viſited us with Mercies every Moment? Could his Kindneſs to us promote his Intereſt, or be Profitable to him? And have not we baſely Betrayed him, inſolently trampled upon his Honour, and delighted to put him to Grief? And is there any Word in our Tongue, or in all the Languages in the World, expreſſive of Baſeneſs and Ingratitude, that may not with the ſtricteſt Juſtice be apply'd to us? Can we anſwer theſe Queſtions without condemning our ſelves? Or, can we pretend to draw a Compariſon, when there is hardly the ſhadow of a Reſemblance.

But ſuppoſe that a Parent is offended by an obſtinate and rebellious Son; we will conſider the greateſt Obligations that the former is capable of heaping upon the latter. He has been the Inſtrument of bringing him into Life; he has watch'd over him, with the tendereſt Care, from the Moment of his Birth, ſupported him in the Weakneſs of his Infancy, aſſiſted the growing Strength of Youth, and provided a Relief for the Infirmities of Age. He hath rejoyced in his Joys, and been pierc'd through with his Sorrows, and yerned over him with as much Affection, as melted the Heart of *Jacob*, when he embraced and clave to his well-beloved

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Son *Joſeph*. And we will ſuppoſe (a hard Suppoſition) that his Son has wearied him with Perverſeneſs, and labour'd to fill up the Meaſure of Ingratitude; yet, even then there is room for Forgiveneſs, and there is a glorious Example to recommend it to him. And it is more than juſt Severity to cut him off for ever, and deny him the leaſt Portion of his Bleſſing. This exceeds the Compaſs of his Offences, and ſeems to reach after a greater Power than God has given him. For he that Puniſhes till Death, endeavours to carry his Revenge beyond it; and by exerting the utmoſt that he can, he ſhews his malicious Deſire of doing more: and in the mean-time is forgetful of our Common Father in Heaven.

For he alone is the Author and Giver of Life; and he watches over the Imperfect Infant in the Womb, and guards him againſt thoſe Dangers which no Fatherly Care can foreſee, or prevent: he protects and defends him, while he lies upon his Mother's Knees, or hangs upon her Breaſts; he turns his Food into Nouriſhment, and confirms the tender Plant, from its firſt ſpringing up into Life, till it riſes to its perfect Height; and he alſo keeps it from falling, while the Evils of Time gradually bow it down towards the Grave: and this Nurſing Father is offended by his Off-ſpring every Hour, and every Moment of Life. Nothing but his Mercy can ſurpaſs the Offences that are offered to him; and tho' they are multiplied

continually, he forbears to withdraw his Bleſſings; he ſtrives to overcome Evil with Good; and if he perceives the leaſt tendency towards Repentance, he runs forth to meet it, and impatiently waits for it. He is always ready to Hear, till his Children refuſe to Pray; and even in the laſt Hour, he opens his Arms to receive them.

It is impoſſible to find out any Injury done by Man, that equals the leaſt of our Sins againſt God. They are widely different in their Nature, and bear no Proportion to each other. And there is ſtill a wider difference between the Perſons Injured. For the Inequality between the greateſt and leaſt of Men is but barely diſcernible, and grounded only on a ſmall Advantage of Power, Wiſdom, or Goodneſs. And every ſeeming Excellence that adorns and diſtinguiſhes one from another; and every valuable Endowment is no more than the Shadow of the divine Perfections, and but the Scatterings of that Bountiful Hand which diſpenſes Bleſſings to a World of Creatures. The fullneſs of Power, Wiſdom, Holineſs, and Goodneſs is in him alone that Created them. And our Tranſgreſſions againſt him riſe in Proportion to the Excellence of his Nature, and the Dignity of his Attributes, and lay a heavy Weight of Guilt upon us, becauſe we violate his pure and aweful Majeſty.

We can therefore draw no Objection againſt Forgiving our Brethren from the Nature of the Offence, or from the State of the

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Perſon offended; much leſs can we draw any Objection from the Multitude of their Offences.

Perhaps our Brother has abuſed our Kindneſs, and made our Wounds bleed afreſh, tho' we have frequently Forgiven him. But he hardly began to Injure us, as ſoon as he was capable of doing it; he has hardly continued to repeat it every Day; much leſs has he multiplied Injuries to *Seventy times Seven* in one Day. But our Sins againſt God began with our Being, were inhanced and aggravated as ſoon as we knew the Difference between Good and Evil, and have increaſed and multiplied together with the Moments of our Life.

We continually want Relief from the Hand of God, and are more and more Indebted to him. We cannot preſume to expect a Supply of our Wants, before we have asked for Pardon; and every time that we deſire his Bleſſings, we have freſh occaſion to beg for Forgiveneſs. For we are compaſſed about with a Cloud of Treſpaſſes, and a new Train of Sins follows us even to the Altar; and we cannot think how much we want Forgiveneſs, without thinking alſo, how much we are obliged to Forgive.

And ſhould our Adverſary Injure us as often as we Offend God (which is indeed impoſſible) we ſhould even then rejoice, that we have ſuch frequent Opportunities of performing the Conditions requir'd of us, and of Imitating the Mercy of God. When we

appear in the Preſence of God, *our Iniquities take hold of us, and we are not able to look up, becauſe our Heart faileth us*; and yet in this deplorable Condition, the divine Compaſſion waits for us; and we know that our Pardon will be ſealed in Heaven, if we will Repent and Forgive our offending Brethren. Can we then refuſe to embrace this great Salvation, and are we diſcourag'd at theſe reaſonable Terms, Do this and your Sins ſhall be Forgiven you?

Many there are that think it a hard Saying, *To Love their Enemies, and overcome Evil with Good*; but why ſhould it be thought a thing unreaſonable with you, to deal with our Enemies, as we deſire God ſhould deal with us.

We are in a ſtate of Rebellion againſt God, and yet we beſeech him, not only to Pardon us, not only to bear with us, but to heap his Bleſſings upon us, the Bleſſings of Time, and the Happineſs of Eternity; and ſurely nothing, but the fulneſs of Love, can move him to withdraw his avenging Hand, and purſue us with Offices of Kindneſs, through all the Portions of Time, and the Ages of Eternity.

Great was the Diſtance between God and us, even before we fell from Innocence; and our Sins had made a yet greater Diſtance, and farther ſeparated between us and him; and tho' we could make no Advances towards him, nor move one Step towards a Reconciliation, yet he vouchſafed

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to cloſe the Difference, and came ſo near to us, as to *take our Nature upon him*, and not only our Nature, but the Burthen of our Sins. He was ſo far from retaining his Enmity, and cheriſhing his juſt Indignation, that he purchas'd our Peace at an Infinite Price; and gave up Himſelf a Sacrifice for us.

And can we ſtill indulge our Paſſions, when he intreats us to ſubdue them? Shall we refuſe to Sacrifice our Pride, and our Revenge, when our Redeemer beſeeches us to renounce them? Surely every Man muſt deſire the Pardon of God; ſurely no Man can think it too hard to Forgive his Brother, for the ſake of God's Pardon.

For, *Thirdly*, unleſs we perform this Condition, we mock and prevaricate with him.

Our Duty and our Neceſſities oblige us to frequent the Throne of Grace with our Prayers. Our Wants and our Obligations *are new every Morning*, and preſs upon us in all our Paths by Day, and compaſs about our Bed by Night. Our Infirmities conſtrain us to lift up our Voice to Heaven, and the Time of Need returns ſo often, that we muſt in Compaſſion to our ſelves, often return to Prayer; and we cannot but cry unto God in the Form of Prayer, which he himſelf has taught us. And if we repeat that Form of Prayer, we make the Forgiveneſs of our Brethren, the Condition of obtaining our own Forgiveneſs.

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Whenſoever we fly to the Mercy-ſeat, we pretend to have Cancell'd all our Brother's Debts, and to have caſt our Enmity behind us; The Purpoſes of a malicious Heart, and the ſtudied Contrivances of Revenge are inconſiſtent with theſe Profeſſions. There is not room for an habitual ſetled Hatred, between the neceſſary Returns of Prayer. For if we were really in Charity with our Brother, when we offered our Morning Sacrifice to God, and ſincerely forgive all the Wrongs we have received; when we attend the Evening Service, we ſhall then truly govern our Paſſions, and *let not the Sun go down, or riſe upon our Wrath.* But dreadful is our Prevarication, unleſs we ſincerely Forgive: We know that God *diſcerneth the Secrets of the Heart,* and therefore *to him doth all Fleſh come:* and yet we preſume to mock him with vain Pretences, and violate the Articles of Peace, even while we ſeem to accept of them. One would think it ſcarcely poſſible to beg for Pardon, without being in earneſt, or to be regardleſs of Salvation, when we ſend up our Petitions for it, and yet unleſs we forgive our Brethren, we deal in a Ludicrous manner with the Almighty, and are not in earneſt when we mention the Terms of Peace.

Vile, wretched Man! Better were it for thee not to Pray at all, than to Pray without Forgiving thy Brethren. Thou deceiveſt thy ſelf; and how importunate ſoever thou art, thou really doſt not deſire Pardon at the Hands

Hands of God: for thou beſeecheſt him only to Forgive as thou haſt Forgiven, and ſince thou haſt not done the one, thou canſt not expect the other; thy own Mouth condemneth thee, and thy Prayer is turned into a Contradiction.

Nor is this all: But, *Fourthly*, It becomes an Imprecation. It greatly concerns every Man, to conſider the State and Condition of his Mind, before he enters into the Preſence of God; if no violent Paſſion diſturbs his Breaſt, no ſecret Malice preys upon it, he is qualified to beg for the Pardon of his Sins. But if he indulges the reſtleſs Thoughts of Revenge, the Rancor and *Bitterneſs* of Hatred, and the *never-dying Worm* of Malice, his Prayer will be *an Abomination*, and bring down Curſes upon his Head.

Let him conſider what he purpoſes to do to his Enemy; whether he does not pant after his Deſtruction, and is not framing a Snare to entangle his Feet in the way of Death; Let him ſurvey the dark Corners of his Heart, and ſee what Blood and Cruelty is lurking there; and then let him ask himſelf, whether he does not call for the ſame unmerciful Uſage, the ſame ſudden Revenge, the ſame dreadful Deſtruction from God, as he earneſtly deſires to bring upon his Brother. The Words of his Prayers are not to be regarded, neither do they bear the natural Conſtruction, but are to be interpreted by his uncharitable Wiſhes, Deſires, and Deſigns. Lord, (ſays he) Forgive me my Treſ-

Treſpaſſes, as I forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt me; that is, thou knoweſt, O Lord, that I do not forgive them, but wait for the Hour of Revenge, and would (if poſſible) enjoy it to the full this very Inſtant, and glut my Paſſion with ſwift and devouring Deſtruction: Therefore, O Lord, I beſeech thee deal with me, as I would deal with mine Enemies, and ſnatch me hence to ſuffer thy Eternal Indignation. How unnatural ſoever this Imprecation may ſeem to be, how much ſoever it may ſhock every one, that has the leaſt Remains of Humanity, yet the Prayer of the uncharitable Man is actually turn'd into this very Imprecation. Let us therefore ſacrifice all Malice and Hatred, and all Deſires of Revenge, to *the Prince of Peace*. Let us learn, after his Example, to love our Enemies, and eſteem every Man as our Brother, and our Friend. Let us conſider how much it concerns us, that our Pardon ſhould be ſealed in Heaven, *before we Go hence, and be no more ſeen.* Let us therefore remove every Let and Hinderance, that may occaſion a Moments delay. And, Let us never Lay down to Sleep without being at Peace with the whole World. Let us *agree with our Adverſary, while we are yet in the way*; and, Let not the Judge ſurprize us in a ſtate of Enmity, leſt our Paſſion ſhould become our Eternal Tormenter, and our Malice ſhould be *an unquenchable Fire*. Let us remember the Words of the Son of *Sirach*, *He that Revengeth ſhall find Vengeance from the Lord*,

Ecclus 28.

Lord, and he ſhall ſurely keep his Sin in Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, ſo ſhall thy Sins alſo be forgiven when thou Prayeſt. One Man beareth Hatred againſt another, and doth he ſeek Pardon from the Lord? He ſheweth no Mercy to a Man, which is like himſelf, and doth he ask Forgiveneſs of his own Sins? If he that is but Fleſh nouriſheth Hatred, who will intreat for Pardon of his Sins? Remember thy End, and let Enmity ceaſe; Remember Corruption and Death, and abide in the Commandments.

St. Paul's *Charge to* Timothy.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. MARY's.

2 TIM. IV. 5.

But Watch thou in all Things, endure Afflictions, Do the Work of an Evangeliſt, make full Proof of thy Miniſtry.

THESE Words are a Part of that Sacred Charge which was given by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, *before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, The Judge of Quick and Dead.*

2 *Tim.* 4. 1.

This important Charge is always ſeaſonable, and neceſſary to be obſerv'd by the Fathers of the Church, and all the Miniſters of Chriſt. But there are ſome Particular Times, in which it is more eſpecially ſeaſonable and neceſſary, and there is more Immediate Occaſion to execute the Divine Commiſſion with the Strickteſt Watchfulneſs and Diligence. And the Apoſtle had Regard to thoſe critical and dangerous Times, and ſuited his Inſtructions to the Wants and Exigencies of the Chriſtian Church. *For the Time* (ſays He) *will come when They will not endure ſound Doctrine: But after their own Luſts, ſhall they heap to themſelves Teachers having Itching Ears. And They ſhall Turn away their Ears from the Truth, and be Turn'd unto Fables. But watch Thou in all Things, Endure Afflictions, Do the Work of an Evangeliſt, make full Proof of thy Miniſtry.* Verſe 3, 4, 5.

Which may be render'd thus: O *Timothy* I require Thee to Perform every Inſtance of thy Duty, as Thou expecteſt to Anſwer for thy Fidelity or Falſehood, at *the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.* Omit no Opportunity of Delivering the Word of God, and Preſſing it home upon the Conſciences of Men. *Whether They will hear, or whether They Forbear*, Do Thou continue *Inſtant* in the Work of the Miniſtry, and fear not the Diſpleaſure of Men, when Thou ſpeakeſt in the Name of God. I cannot lay too much Streſs upon this Matter, nor inſiſt too Earneſtly upon it; For I ſee that the Days are

now

now Approaching, in which the pure Light of the Goſpel will offend the Sight of Wicked Men, and its ſound and untainted Doctrines, will be grating and diſagreeable to their favourite Corruptions: And to avoid thoſe unwelcome Truths which They are Afraid to Hear, They will ſeek for Teachers after their own Hearts, that will ſooth and indulge them in their Luſts, and mould and ſoften Religion into a Baſe and Servile Compliance with Their vicious Inclinations. When theſe Things are come to paſs, the Goſpel will be Treated with Scorn and Diſdain; and new-invented Fables will gain entire Credit, and be greedily hearkned to by deluded Souls. In the midſt of ſo vile and degenerate an Age, The Faithful Miniſter will be rejected as a vain *Babler* of Antiquated and Unfaſhionable Doctrines, and meet with nothing but Contempt and Hatred, for endeavouring to Plead the Cauſe of God. But notwithſtanding this Diſcouraging Proſpect, or rather becauſe theſe Evils are open to thy View, *Stand* Thou *in the Gap* to oppoſe the Stream of Wickedneſs: *Let thy Loyns be girded about, and thy Lamp always burning*, that as *the Watchman of the Lord*, thou mayſt ſuffer no Enemy to Invade *the Flock of Chriſt*, no *Tares* to be *ſown* in *the Field* of God; But mayſt give immediate Notice of the ſubtle Approaches of Satan, and Diſappoint his ſecret Inſinuations. Thou muſt expect a great deal of Trouble in the Diſcharge of thine Office, and Prepare thy ſelf for all the Calamities

Calamities, that Malice and Power can bring upon thee. But Remember that thy Lord and Maſter is Able to ſupport thee under all theſe Afflictions; and if thou Perſevereſt in his Work, he will *give thee a Crown of Recompence.* Therefore, *I charge Thee,* Preach the whole Truth of the Goſpel, in its natural Plainneſs and Simplicity: Deliver it with its utmoſt Force, and Strive to Imitate *the Son of Man, out of whoſe Mouth went a ſharp two-edged Sword: Bear not this Sword in vain,* but pierce the Hearts of careleſs and preſumptuous Sinners, and ſtrike to the very Bottom of their Corruption. Fix the Principles of Religion in their Minds, and ceaſe not to Inculcate and Repeat them, till they are engraven upon *the Tables of their Hearts.* Let not the Fear of Diſpleaſing Men, Tempt thee to conceal *the Terrors of the Lord*; neither let any fond Pretences of Moderation prevail with thee to recede one Jot or Tittle from the Authority that God has given thee, but exert and maintain it with undaunted Courage; and let not all the Promiſes or Threatnings of the World induce, or force thee to violate or betray thy Truſt.

Thus we may explain and interpret St. *Paul's* Charge to *Timothy*: A great and weighty Charge in its own nature, but of greater Weight and Moment, upon the Occaſion for which it was given. And to render it the more effectual with *Timothy*, and to ſtamp it in deeper Characters upon

his Breaſt, the Apoſtle proceeds to tell him, that the Church of *Epheſus* would ſoon be left entirely to his Care, and He would ſoon be depriv'd of the Direction and Aſſiſtance of his ſpiritual Father. *For I am now ready to be offer'd,* (ſays the Apoſtle) *and the Time of my Departure is at hand. I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſh'd my Courſe. I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that Day,* 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *and not to me only, but to all them alſo that love his Appearing.*

If the Nature of the Charge did not ſufficiently recommend and enforce it ſelf: If the Seaſon for which it was calculated, did not ſtir up, and awaken *Timothy*, and engage him to watch inceſſantly over the Church of God: Surely St. *Paul* muſt entirely endear it to him, when he bequeath'd it as one of the laſt Inſtances of his Love; made it, as it were, his Dying Requeſt, and ſet before him his own glorious Example, and That eternal Crown of Righteouſneſs, which *The Lord, the Righteous Judge,* was ready to confer upon him, and all his Faithful Servants.

And if the Words of St. *Paul* muſt neceſſarily enter into the Soul of *Timothy*, and take Poſſeſſion of his Heart, They muſt alſo enter with equal Force into the Hearts of all the Miniſters of Chriſt, that will allow them due Conſideration. For They were not ſpoken peculiarly to the Biſhop of *Epheſus*, but equally concern all the Biſhops and

and Paſtors of the Chriſtian Church. The Seaſons to which they were adapted, were not only the Days of *Timothy*. We have certainly as Juſt, I fear, we have a Juſter Title to the Character of *the Latter Days*. And it is our Indiſpenſable Duty to ſtand upon our Guard againſt thoſe Pernicious Evils that flouriſh and abound. For *This is their Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs.*

That we may not be ſlack, and negligent in our Duty, I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, That there is Immediate Occaſion for more than ordinary Vigilance and Induſtry in the Work of the Miniſtry;
And, *Secondly*, What Duties are more particularly requir'd of us, upon ſuch trying Occaſions;
And, *Thirdly*, Shall endeavour to enforce the Performance of thoſe Duties.

And, *Firſt*, I am to ſhew that there is Immediate Occaſion for more than ordinary Vigilance and Induſtry in the Work of the Miniſtry.

Vice and Error have been the Product and Growth of every Age; and the great Enemy of Mankind has Cultivated and Promoted his Accurſed Cauſe, and made many Proſelytes in every Generation that has gone before us. But the Seeds of Wickedneſs, and the Principles of Iniquity, have never been more Induſtriouſly ſown, and never in-

creas'd and multiplied more than in the preſent Age. The Agents of the Tempter lift up their Heads with an unuſual Confidence, and appear without any Senſe of Shame, or Fear of Puniſhment. Nay, They not only Flatter themſelves with the Hopes of Impunity, but ſeem to expect and claim a Reward; as if it were Meritorious to Eſpouſe the Intereſt of Sin, and an acceptable Service to Trample upon Religion.

The Diſtinctions of Good and Evil, and the eternal Differences between Right and Wrong, are Fallaciouſly Confounded; and aſſiduous Endeavours are us'd to Remove the Old Foundations,and eraſe the Impreſſions of Natural Religion. The Places, and the Methods of Education are condemn'd; and the Fountains of Learning, Thoſe Glorious Lights of the World; are the Mark againſt which the *Poiſonous Arrows of the Father of Lies*, are maliciouſly Directed. And the Intent of theſe virulent Calumnies is to Bereave This unhappy Nation of the Means of Knowledge, and bring groſs Darkneſs upon it, that either the un-educated Youth may be utterly void of Principles, or be grounded only in Principles of Iniquity.

Under a Pretence of Moderation, and a plauſible Shew of Tenderneſs in indifferent Matters, we are brought at Length to a general Looſeneſs and Indifference: And the weightieſt Branches of the Law, and the chief Articles of Faith, are Daily given up, as if they were no more than Temporary Rites

Rites and Ceremonies. And it paſſes for Intemperate Heat, and Indiſcreet, and Unguarded Zeal, to *Contend earneſtly for the Faith*, and expreſs a Juſt Indignation againſt the increaſing Pride and Inſolence of Infidelity.

It is ſufficient Matter of Wonder and Sorrow, to obſerve the different Sorts of Hereſy that have, in their ſeveral Turns, been cheriſh'd and encourag'd, and the various Attempts that have been made to weaken our Faith, and bring every Article of Religion into Diſpute.

As Opportunity ſerves, the Enemies of God our Saviour, either walk in Darkneſs, and Inſinuate themſelves into unwary Minds, under an Artful Diſguiſe; or ſtalk abroad at the Noon-day, defying the feeble Diſcipline of the Church, and making it *a Proverb of Reproach.* And thoſe Few that have yet Courage and Integrity enough to engage in Defence of their deſpis'd Religion, are Treated with Contempt, as *David* was, by *Eliab his Brother*, when *he came down* to encounter the Man that *Defied the Armies of the Living God.* But whatſoever Indignities they ſuffer, They may return *David's* Anſwer, *What have I now done? Is there not a Cauſe?* 1 *Sam.* 17. 29.

There is undoubtedly ſufficient Provocation to kindle all their Zeal, and call forth all their Paſſions and Affections into the Service of God: and how Faſhionable ſoever it is grown, to be Liſtleſs and Unactive,

Indolent and Unconcern'd, yet moſt aſſuredly it is the Duty of every One, to expreſs a Reſentment of the unnatural Injuries that are offer'd to our Lord, and the Barbarous Reproaches that are caſt upon Him. *Is it nothing to you, All ye that paſs by, to ſee the Son of God Crucified afreſh, and to hear the Blaſphemies of the Multitude, wherewith they blaſpheme the Lord their Redeemer?*

Meekneſs and Candour, Mildneſs and Gentleneſs are Truly--Chriſtian Virtues; and they have their proper Seaſons, in which they ſhine forth *in perfect Beauty.* But how much ſoever we admire that charitable Temper, that *Beareth all Things, and is not eaſily Provok'd:* Though it is ſome times Commendable to *Keep our Mouth, as it were with a Bridle, and Hold our Tongue, and ſpeak Nothing:* yet there are ſome Occaſions upon which it is Criminal to be Silent; and if we have not entirely loſt the Spirit of Religion, *our Heart* muſt be *Hot within us*, and we muſt be compell'd *at the Laſt to ſpeak with our Tongue*, when our Bleſſed Saviour is defam'd as a ſpurious Pretender, and his whole Goſpel is branded with the Infamous Charge of being an Impoſture.

We are fallen into thoſe Unhappy Times, in which many are reſolv'd to do, and many more are willing to conſent to every Thing that can be done againſt Religion; The Former being inceſſantly Active to promote, and the Latter entirely Paſſive to give way to all the Evils that the accurſed

Spirit

Spirit endeavours to bring upon us. And the Growth of Poiſonous Hereſies proceeds no leſs from Supineneſs and Negligence on one Hand, than from malicious Subtlety on the other.

But, Let thoſe inadvertent Wretches, that hardly obſerve, and dare not oppoſe the Progreſs of Wickedneſs, remember the Cauſe of that remarkable Vengeance that purſued the Houſe of *Eli*; *I will Judge his Houſe for ever* (ſaith the Lord) *for the Iniquity which he knoweth*, not only *becauſe his Sons made themſelves vile*, but becauſe *he reſtrain'd them not.* 1 *Sam.* 3. 13.

There are *Smooth* Teachers riſen up amongſt us, that ſuit their Doctrines to every vain Caprice and Humour of Men, and are occaſionally of any, or of no Religion. Tho' they interpret away the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, yet they glory in the Name of Proteſtants, and diſgrace that Name by Glorying in it. They frame to themſelves a ſtrange Sort of Negative Religion, not only renouncing the Corruptions of the Romiſh Church, but alſo the pure and genuine Doctrines of the Goſpel. And according to their Licentious Principles, it is lawful for Men to believe any Thing, or nothing, as they pleaſe, provided they call themſelves Proteſtants, and diſtinguiſh themſelves by an Empty, Titular Profeſſion. They reſolve the Whole of Religion into the Sincerity of the Perſwaſion, and thereby place every Sect upon a Level with the Eſtabliſh'd Church, and grant equal Terms to

the Sincere Heathen, and the True Believer. It may ſeem but a ſmall Matter, to ſay, that this abſurd Opinion is directly contrary to an Article of our Church. But I may alſo ſay, that it is heavily Laden with Miſchief, and Big with all the Evils that *the Heart of Man can conceive.* For it Juſtifies all the Errors that can be Broach'd, and Sanctifies all the Villanies that can be Committed. Whatſoever wicked Men are ſtrongly Inclin'd to Do, They will ſoon firmly Perſwade themſelves that they may Do it; and a Firm Perſwaſion will eaſily paſs for Sincerity; and that ſuppos'd Sincerity will animate and encourage them to Ruſh into all manner of Wickedneſs with greedineſs.

To Do Evil, that Good may come, is ſeverely condemn'd by St. *Paul*; and we Juſtly condemn the Church of *Rome* for entertaining this Pernicious Principle, and allowing it ſelf in thoſe accurſed Practices that flow from it. But Thoſe pretended Proteſtants that Juſtify every thing by the Sincerity of the Perſwaſion, do undoubtedly concur with the Papiſts, that Juſtify every thing by the Sincerity of the Intention: And how much ſoever They may ſeem to Abhor the Jeſuites, They Differ from them only in Name, for They effectually Perform their Work, and Fight under their Banner, in Defence of *the Kingdom of Darkneſs.*

When the Articles of our Faith are in continual Danger of being ſtolen away, by the

the ſubtle Artifices of evil Men, and Hereſies are Daily creeping in amongſt us, and This Great, Fundamental Error, that ſubverts our Religion, and authorizes every Kind of Hereſy, is receiv'd with Applauſe, and Inſults and Triumphs over us; There is certainly immediate Occaſion for more than ordinary Vigilance and Induſtry in the Work of the Miniſtry: I therefore Proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew what Duties are more Particularly Requir'd of us upon ſuch Trying Occaſions.

And, Firſt, we are requir'd to be *Watchful in all Things.* There was always more than ſufficient Occaſion for thisDuty. Even as ſoon as the Goſpel was Planted; Even whilſt it was daily Water'd with the Blood of its Miniſters, St. *Paul* Foreſaw that *grievous Wolves were Entring in amongſt the Diſciples, not Sparing the Flock, and that even of their own Selves, Men ſhould ariſe, ſpeaking Perverſe Things, to Draw away Diſciples after them. Therefore* (ſays the Apoſtle to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*) *watch, and Remember that by the ſpace of three Years, I ceas'd not to warn every one Night and Day with Tears.* Strong were the Reaſons by which He enforc'd this Duty, and engaging the Example, by which he Recommended it to them. But methinks there needs no Argument to enforce, no Example to recommend it, if the Miniſters of Chriſt will but remember, that they were Ordain'd by the *Holy-Ghoſt to Feed the Church of God, which he Purchas'd with his own Blood.* They

Acts 20. 29,30,31.

ver. 28.

They ſhould always imagine, that they hear their Saviour expoſtulating with them, *What cannot ye Watch with me one Hour?* They ſhould never *give Sleep to their Eyes, nor Slumber to their Eyelids*, while *He is at Hand that will Betray* their Lord and Maſter.

It is a great Degree of Honour to be appointed *Watchmen of the Lord*, and to be Joyn'd with Angels and Archangels, in the glorious Employment of *tarrying round about* the Servants of God, and guarding them againſt the Dangerous Approaches of *the great Deſtroyer*.

The Time that is allotted to us for the Execution of this Sacred Office, is but of a ſhort Duration! and if we conſider the value of thoſe Immortal Souls, that are committed to our Charge, we ſhall endeavour to improve This ſhort and fleeting Time to their utmoſt Advantages, and be unwilling to neglect any part of ſo Precious a Treaſure. And the Conſequences of our Neglect are ſo fatal, and it is ſo hard to retrieve the Opportunities that are Loſt, that we cannot but Tremble at the Thoughts of ſo dangerous a Neglect.

The Beginning of Sin is but ſmall, but it quickly grows too great to be controll'd. The firſt Inſinuations of Hereſy are cloath'd with a Plauſible Appearance, and are ſo artfully ſuited to the ſecret Paſſages that Lead into the Minds of Men, that they ſlide into them almoſt in an Inſtant, and eaſily obtain Admiſſion into their Affections.

Therefore

Therefore the Miniſters of God muſt keep their Thoughts intent upon their Duty, and ſtrictly Examine every ſeeming Friend, leſt he ſhould prove a mortal Enemy. They ought to Beware of every Conceſſion that They make, and take heed to their Steps, leſt they ſhould draw too near to him, and be inſenſibly carried away by his crafty Devices. Though he fawns upon them, while he is too weak to Contend with them, yet he will *Bite like a Serpent, and Sting like an Adder*, when he is warm'd and animated by their Encouragement, and has gather'd Life and Strength from the Boſom that cheriſh'd him.

Thoſe unhappy Men that have been too tender and indulgent to Hereſy and Schiſm, have afterwards wanted that Indulgence which they ſhew'd, and ſuffer'd thoſe Penalties which They forbore to inflict. There is a wide Difference between the affected Modeſty of theſe confederate Evils, while they Beg for Protection, and their inſolent Tyranny when they are rais'd to Power. And as we juſtly dread the One, we ſhould take eſpecial Care, that we be not deceiv'd by the Other.

The Doctrines of the Goſpel, are a Truſt that cannot be Violated, without ſacrilegious Impiety; and we are not True to that Truſt, if we ſuffer ought of it to be Diminiſh'd. How Little ſoever we diminiſh it at firſt, we cannot be aſſur'd that we ſhall Proceed no farther. Experience

too

too Plainly tells us, that it is Dangerous to Recede from the Primitive Truth: The Conſequences of it are more Extenſive than we imagine; and the ſmalleſt Breach grows wide enough to Let in a Multitude of Errors, that may at length Trample upon the Ruines of Chriſtianity; and Leave not ſo much as the Name of a Church amongſt us. If we admit of one Exception to thoſe Excellent Rules, which God has Preſcrib'd to us, Perverſe and Unreaſonable Men will be always ready to make their own Caſe an Exception to thoſe Rules; and upon the ſuppos'd Lawfulneſs of Tranſgreſſing them in one Point, they will ground the Lawfulneſs of Tranſgreſſing them in all: and many deluded Souls will bitterly Bewail the unexpected Growth of thoſe *Tares*, that ſprung from their own Conceſſions.

It therefore concerns us to Keep the Ground which we were commanded to Maintain, and never give our Enemies Poſſeſſion of any Part of it, leſt they ſhould Diſpoſſeſs us of the Whole.

The Immortal Souls of our Brethren are a Charge that deſerves our tendereſt Care; and if we have any Bowels of Compaſſion, we ſhould Watch continually, that they may not be betray'd into eternal Perdition. Poiſon is of an Inſinuating and Searching Nature; and if it Taints the remoteſt Member, it quickly diffuſes it ſelf through the Body: And there is no Poiſon more Inſinuating than Hereſy, none that darts it

ſelf

ſelf with greater Swiftneſs thro' every Part, and ſooner ſpreads its malignant Infection: If we are ſenſible of its Subtle and Powerful Influence, we muſt inceſſantly Guard the uncorrupted Members of the Church of God, and Provide an early Antidote againſt the firſt Entrance of Corruption.

But, *Secondly*, In the Diſcharge of our Office, we muſt *Endure Afflictions:*

Enduring Afflictions, not only ſignifies our Suffering them, but alſo patiently Suſtaining them, and Perſevering in our Duty, notwithſtanding the worſt that we can ſuffer.

Every Man, even in his Private Capacity, has a Multitude of Adverſaries to encounter, and *muſt wreſtle againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt Spiritual Wickedneſs in High Places.* And the Enemy of Souls aſſaults every Member of the Chriſtian Church, and comes both with Craft and Violence, to weaken the Innocence of every Servant of God. But he makes extraordinary Efforts againſt the Chriſtian Miniſtry, and lays the greateſt Streſs upon his Attempts againſt it: For He Knows, that the Conſequence of This his chief Deſign, will not be the Deſtruction of a ſingle Soul, but the eternal Ruin of Thouſands: And if he can but ſucceed in this complicated Miſchief, he ſhall involve innumerable Multitudes in Perdition. Therefore he bends his whole Strength againſt the Commiſſion which Chriſt has given us, and employs the Malice

Malice and Induſtry of All his Legions, to Blaſt and Defeat it. He endeavours to wound Religion, in the Perſons of its Miniſters, and to bring the Suſpicion of Falſhood upon it, by throwing the Charge of Prieſt-Craft upon Them. And his pernicious Deſigns are effectual, even to his Wiſh, and the evil Work proſpers in his Hand. Many there are, as willing to Spread the Calumny, as *the Father of Lies* is to Invent it; many that greedily Embrace, and fondly Magnify every ſcandalous Report, that is rais'd to Defame the Chriſtian Prieſthood, and make it almoſt their only Buſineſs, to Repreſent the Paſtors of the Church, as the Peſts of Mankind; and the Men that *Trouble Iſrael, and Turn the World upſide down.* And if they can but gain Credit to their baſe Inſinuations, and expoſe them to the Diſpleaſure of the Civil Magiſtrate, it is Matter of the moſt inſolent Joy and Triumph to them. Suſpicion immediately Paſſes for Proof, and Accuſation for Conviction. Thoſe Double-minded Men, that Pretended to *Abide with them for a while, will not Tarry if they begin to Fall:* Though They once *ſpoke ſweetly with their Lips, yet in their Heart They Imagin'd how to throw them into a Pit*; and when *they find Opportunity, they will not be ſatisfied with Blood. When Adverſity comes upon them, They are there firſt,* to Mock and Upbraid them, and in the Day of their Calamity, they *ſhake their Heads and clap their Hands, and Whiſper much, and change their Countenance.*

It

It might at leaſt be expected, from the Members of the ſame Church, that they ſhould *wait till they ſee the End*, and forbear to condemn their Spiritual Fathers, till they were brought to Judgment: or rather, it might be expected, that They ſhould Long to ſee their Innocence appear, and that their *Hearts ſhould Tremble* for the Miniſters of God, till their Cauſe is heard, and their Integrity juſtified.

But notwithſtanding the baſe and ungenerous Behaviour of Perfidious Men, we Hope that the Sons of the Prophets will for ever eſcape from the Snares that are Laid for them. May *Innocence always be found in them before Thee, O God.* And may it alſo Appear *before Thee, O King, that they have done no Hurt.* May the Almighty *ſend his Angel* to *ſtop the Mouths* of thoſe that *come about them like a Ramping and a Roaring Lion.* And may *no manner of Hurt be found upon them, becauſe they Believe in their God.*

But how many and great ſoever their Sufferings are, they muſt Bravely reſolve to endure them: For without this Reſolution, They cannot maintain the Poſt which they were appointed to Defend. And if they deſert their own Cauſe, when Evils preſs hard upon them, they are wanting to their Duty, when there is moſt occaſion to exert it. Then is the Hour of Tryal; and Then moſt eſpecially They ſhould obſerve the Apoſtle's Charge, *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the Faith, Quit you like Men, be ſtrong.*

They

They that are entring into the Work of the Miniſtry, and are deſirous to exerciſe the Holy Function, ſhould ſeriouſly conſider the Difficulties that will attend it, and the Troubles that will cleave to them through the Courſe of their Duty. They cannot diſcharge their Truſt without a declar'd Enmity to the Luſts and Paſſions of Men. Therefore they will have a numerous Party engag'd in the cloſeſt Alliance and Combination againſt them; and muſt ſtrive againſt inveterate Hatred and Prejudice.

And their Commiſſion it ſelf renders them Obnoxious to Diſgrace and Miſery. For the Adverſaries of our Lord delight in Reproaching and Injuring his Servants; and if they can fix no other Crime upon them, they will make it a heinous Crime, even to Accept of his Commiſſion; And if the Office it ſelf offends, much more muſt the Faithful Execution of it. They muſt therefore expect their Sufferings, as if they would unavoidably Fall upon them: and if they will conſtantly Speak the Truth, they muſt patiently Suffer for the Truth's Sake. And though they are compaſs'd about with Evils, they muſt,

Thirdly, Do the Work of an Evangeliſt. Neceſſity is Laid upon us, yea, Woe is unto us, if we Preach not the Goſpel.

And the Neceſſity increaſes, when ſinful Men *heap to themſelves Teachers after their own Luſts*: And the heavieſt Woes will fall upon us, if we forbear to Deliver *ſound Doctrine*,

Doctrine, when the *unstable* Multitude are *Turn'd unto Fables*. *The Work of an Evangelist* is directly opposite to the Business of a *False Apostle*: and whilst Perverse Seducers Corrupt and Disguise the Truth, the Ministers of the Gospel should *wait on their Ministry*, *and they that Teach on their Teaching*, *and they that Exhort on Exhortation*. Rom. 12. 7, 8.

We must stedfastly defend the aweful Mysteries of our Holy Religion, and endeavour to rescue them from the bold Abuses of those vain, opinionative Men, that Profane them with their unhallow'd Tongues, and bring them down to a Level with their absurd Conceptions. We must more Particularly guard Those Articles that are most vigorously Attack'd, and constantly Assert Those Inestimable Truths, that are most confidently Denied. We must often and earnestly inculcate the great Duties of Life, and direct our Endeavours against those Fashionable Vices, that make the loudest Claims to Authority and Dominion. We must deliver to our Flock, That very Gospel which we receiv'd from Christ, without Presuming to Lessen any Obligation, or to Conceal the Terrors, by which it is enforc'd. We must not speak of Religion, as if it were an indifferent Matter, nor suffer it to lie Loose upon the Minds of Men, to be scattered away *by every Wind of vain Doctrine*: But must *sow the Seed* where there is *Depth of Earth* to Receive it, and Lay it up as *a Pearl of great Price*, out of

the reach of thoſe Temptations that are offer'd to Bereave them of it. We muſt engage their Affections in Behalf of their Duty, and thoroughly Convince them of the Danger of Falling from it.

Thus ſhall we *Do the Work of an Evangeliſt*, a Work that deſerves our whole Time and Care, and to which we ſhould entirely devote our Strength. This is our unalterable Duty, amidſt all the Changes and Chances of Life: A Duty that ought not to be Diſpens'd with for the ſake of any Circumſtances of Time. Our Enemies are ready enough to Accuſe us for going beyond our Sphere, and interfering with Matters that do not concern us: But This is properly the Buſineſs of our Calling; and if we are Intent upon this Employment, They cannot juſtly condemn us: But if the World condemns us, we have a Righteous God that will Juſtify us, and abundantly Reward us, if we *Finiſh the Work that he gave us to Do:*

Therefore, *Laſtly*, We ſhould *make full Proof of our Miniſtry.* The Authority that is entruſted with us, is God's; and we are Injurious to Him, if we Depart from it. We are not at Liberty, to vary from our Credentials, or contract the Extent of our Commiſſion; but muſt Labour to fill up its Meaſure, and entirely anſwer the Will of him that ſent us.

The Beſt of us, in every Rank and Station, fall ſhort of our Duty, and when *we have*

have done All that is in our Power, *we are but unprofitable Servants.* But there is more particular Occaſion for Perſeverance in the Work of our Holy Function: There are ſtill many things wanting, and ſtill freſh Provocations to go forth into the Spiritual Conflict: and every new Provocation obliges us afreſh, as if we had Juſt receiv'd our Commiſſion, and were immediately Commanded by God to enter into the Battle.

We are accountable for the Progreſs of Hereſy, if we ſee it Ariſing, and yet neglect to put a Stop to it; and the Souls that Periſh will be laid to our Charge, if we forbear to ſhew them their Danger.

Whatever Services we may vainly Boaſt of, we muſt not yet go out of *the Vineyard*, till our appointed *Hour is come*; but muſt reſolutely *Bear the Burthen and Heat of the Day*, till our Lord is pleas'd to call us. No ſpecious Pretence muſt render us ſlack in our Endeavours; but we muſt always Believe, that there are yet many Duties to be done, before we can *make full Proof of our Miniſtry.*

To Quicken our Diligence in theſe Duties, I ſhall,

Thirdly, Endeavour to Enforce the Performance of them. And here I may propoſe the Example of our Enemies, as a ſtrong Incitement to Watchfulneſs and Induſtry, Patience and Perſeverance in the important Buſineſs of our Holy Calling.

How conſtantly does the Tempter watch over his intended Prey! How Patiently

does He wait for the faireſt Opportunities of Acceſs! How frequently does He repeat his Invitations to Sin! How eagerly does He embrace the firſt Tendency and Inclination towards it! And, How cloſely does he attend to his Work, till he has accompliſh'd it!

And his Armies are not leſs Watchful and Diligent, never forſaking their appointed Place, nor neglecting the critical Moment, nor ſlackning the Purſuit in the Day of Battle. Nor is this Diligence only to be obſerv'd in the Apoſtate Spirits, whoſe Active and Subtile Nature Qualifies them for the ſpeedy Performance of their Malicious Deſigns. For the Devil has other Miniſters upon Earth, almoſt equally Zealous to Promote his Cauſe, and entirely ſubſervient to his Purpoſe. What Pains and Conflicts do Wicked Men chearfully ſuſtain, for the Sake of the great Deſtroyer! with how Quick an Eye do they ſpie out every Opportunity of Doing Miſchief! with how ſwift and ſure a Stroke do They ſurprize thoſe unhappy Creatures, whom They have mark'd for Deſtruction!

Theſe Examples ſhould Provoke us to be Vigilant and Induſtrious in the Service of God: And whilſt we abhor the Evil which they Do continually, we ſhould imitate the Zeal with which they Do it. Our Love to the Church of God, ſhould burn with as ſtrong and lively a Flame, as their Malice. Their Malice is *ſtronger than Death*, and *more cruel than the Grave: The Coals thereof*

are

are Coals of Fire, which hath a moſt vehement Flame, our Love ſhould therefore be a Fire that *cannot be Drown'd by the Floods, nor Quench'd by many Waters:* and though the World would *give us all its Subſtance* in exchange for it, the Price ſhould be *utterly contemn'd*, as unequal to our Love.

But if the Example of our Enemies does not Provoke us to Diſcharge our Duty, Let me Propoſe an Inviting Pattern for our Imitation. The Bleſſed Angels, that *ſtand before God and the Lamb for ever and ever*, Delight to guard the Souls of Men, and to *Miniſter to them that are Heirs of Salvation.* As *they Reſt not Day and Night ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*, ſo they act without ceaſing for the unſpeakable Benefit of their Beloved Charge, *and never Faint in their Watches.*

But, Behold a Watchman infinitely Greater than the Angels! Even the eternal Spirit of God vouchſafes to be a Fellow-Labourer with us, and waits with infinite Patience for the Succeſs of his Labours, grieving at the Follies, and bearing the Perverſeneſs of Men. And we may ſay, with reverence, that *he watches in all Things, endures Afflictions, Does the Work of an Evangeliſt, makes full Proof of his Miniſtry.*

How then can we neglect our Truſt, ſince God Himſelf thinks it not unworthy of his Care! *As the Hills ſtand about Jeruſalem, even ſo ſtandeth the Lord round about his People, from this Time forth for Evermore.* Pſ. 124. 2.

Shall not we *Keep our Eyes waking*, ſince *He that Keepeth our Sion will neither Slumber, nor Sleep?* Shall we not rejoyce to Defend the Flock of Chriſt, ſince *the Lord himſelf is alſo their Keeper, The Lord is their Defence upon their Right-hand?*

Pſal. 121. 4, 5.

Let us conſider whoſe Souls they are that are committed to our Care. They are the Inheritance of Chriſt, our Saviour, which he Purchas'd with an ineſtimable Price. They are his Peculiar Treaſure; a Treaſure Dearer to him than Life it ſelf; a Treaſure which he Redeem'd by Suffering all the Agonies of Death. Let us remember, that He commanded us to watch over them, whoſe Life was one continued Watching for our Sakes, and who is always mindful of us, making never-ceaſing Interceſſion for us. If we *endure Afflictions* in his Service, Let us Think of *That Bitter Cup* which he chearfully drank for our Cauſe: and, Let us readily follow *the Captain of our Salvation*, through the Paths of Miſery and Shame, to the Throne of Glory and Happineſs.

Let us be Ambitious of *Doing the Work of an Evangeliſt*, ſince the Goſpel which we Preach was brought down from Heaven by the Son of God, and ſeal'd and ratified with his Blood.

And, Let us conſtantly endeavour to *make full Proof of that Miniſtry* which our Lord Bequeath'd to us, as his final Legacy upon Earth, and by which he is *always Preſent*

ſent with us, even to End of the World. What Horrors muſt Fill our Minds, if we Betray ſo great a Truſt! what Peace ſhall we enjoy, if we are True and Faithful to it! Our Conſcience will Daily applaud and encourage us, if we are Daily Watching. *A Joyful Light will Ariſe in the midſt of the Darkneſs, if we* Patiently *endure Afflictions.* The Goſpel will be our Comfort and Reward, if we ſincerely Preach it. And we ſhall Long to give an Account of our Stewardſhip, when we have *made Full Proof of our Miniſtry.*

Bleſſed are Thoſe Servants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find Watching. Bleſſed are Thoſe Faithful and Wiſe Stewards, that give his Houſehold their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon. Luk. 12. 42

Bleſſed are *They that Keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jeſus,* and *overcome* the Temptations that cloſe them in on every ſide. *The ſame ſhall be cloath'd in white Raiment: Their Names ſhall never be blotted out of the Book of Life.* The Lord their Saviour, *God Bleſſed for ever, ſhall confeſs their Name before his Father, and before his Angels,* and Place them *with him in his Throne for ever and ever.*

Religious Principles the Beſt Support of Government.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

The *Firſt* of *Auguſt.*

PROV. XVI. 12.

The Throne is Eſtabliſh'd by Righteouſneſs.

THE Experience of *Solomon* was gather'd by a Wiſe and Diſcerning Spirit, and drawn from the Strickteſt Obſervation of the different Nature, and Properties of Things.

He had attain'd to a Large and Extenſive Knowledge of Good; and was alſo too nearly Acquainted with Evil: and having enjoy'd the Advantages that flow'd from the Former, he had alſo ſuffer'd the Miſchiefs that aroſe from the Latter. And as he was therefore capable of Conducting us through the common Affairs of Life, and the ſeveral Duties that belong to the Lower Stations of the World, ſo he was more Particularly Qualified to treat of the Great and Important Intereſts of Government.

Being ſeated on the Throne of *Judah*, he had from thence a Wide and Comprehenſive View of all the Difficulties that attend a Crown, and the ſureſt Meaſures of Policy, to Direct the Head that wears it. He had ſeen the Succeſs of a well-order'd Government, and the various Miſcarriages of Sin and Folly. And as the reſult of his Experience, he declares that *it is an Abomination to Kings to commit Wickedneſs*; that they not only Diſlike or Condemn it, but Hate it with Abhorrence, and Caſt it from them as an Abomination; and then gives this powerful Reaſon, which always does, or always ſhould prevail; *For the Throne is Eſtabliſh'd by Righteouſneſs:* A Maxim that ought to be thoroughly Conſider'd, becauſe it is of Univerſal Concernment. For the Welfare of Society greatly conduces to the preſent Peace and Happineſs of Men. By this *the whole Body* of Mankind *is fitly Join'd together, and compacted by that which every Joint* Eph. 4. 16.

ſup-

ſupplieth, according to the effectual Working in the Meaſure of every Part. And this beneficial Union which is ſought after by the Earlieſt Deſires and Inclinations of Nature, receives its Strength and Support from Government. This is the Head of the Body; and This diffuſes Life and Happineſs through all the Members, like the River that ſent forth its refreſhing Streams to water the Garden of God.

And Government which was ordain'd by the Almighty to Act under him, and diſpenſe his Bleſſings to his Great Family, the World, is Suſtain'd and Kept in its proper State by Religion. This *bears up the Pillars of it*, and eſtabliſhes its Beautiful Order. But when this is withdrawn, it loſes the Sinews of its Strength, and falls an eaſy Prey to Diſorder and Confuſion. Society is then no more a comfort to Mankind, but Languiſhes and Declines apace: *its whole Head is ſick, and its whole Heart faint.*

It is the Intereſt of every People that the Form of Government ſhould continue, and be fix'd upon a Laſting Foundation. And whenſoever there is an appearance of change, or whenſoever the Adminiſtration of Publick Affairs paſſes from one Hand to another, the Members of the Community are oblig'd to preſerve the State, and uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to uphold it.

And though the Succeſſion of Princes may afford an agreeable Proſpect, and the Generations to come, may juſtly expect the ſame

ſame Protection: and the ſame Advantages, as their Fathers enjoy'd; yet the Good Subject cannot but feel at leaſt ſome ſtirring of Fear, ſome affectionate Concern, when *a Nurſing Father, or Nurſing Mother* is taken away, and *The Breath of our Noſtrils returns to God that gave it.*

And in regard to the Memory of That Glorious Queen, That Now Bleſſed Saint, which as on this Day chang'd an Earthly for a Heavenly Crown; as well as in regard to Her Royal Heirs and Succeſſors; I think my ſelf Oblig'd to ſhew, what is the ſtrongeſt Support of Government, and what Principles will moſt effectually Maintain it. And being directed by the Wiſeſt of Kings and Men, I ſhall not Endeavour to recommend any Temporary Principles that ſerve only for a Day, and are adapted to Occaſional Changes and Revolutions of Government, but the Eſſential Principles of Religion, that are liable to *no variableneſs nor ſhadow of Turning*, but like their Heavenly Author are *the ſame, Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever.* Heb 13.8.

In Purſuance of this Deſign, I ſhall

Firſt, Shew that Righteouſneſs Eſtabliſhes the Throne, and moſt Effectually anſwers the End and Deſign of Government. And,

Secondly, Shall Guard againſt thoſe Evil Principles that ſubvert the Throne, and are deſtructive of Government.

To Prove that Righteouſneſs Eſtabliſhes the Throne, and moſt effectually anſwers the

the End and Design of Government, I might urge the Testimony even of the Enemies of Religion; and we need not any farther Witness, since their Impious Suggestion abundantly shews the Dependance of Government upon Religion.

For they make it the Invention of Arbitrary Princes and Crafty Priests, to strike an Awe upon the Deluded World, and keep the People in Subjection, by the Groundless Fears of a Future State.

How false soever this Suggestion is, it confesses at least, that Religion enforces Obedience, and strengthens the Bands of the Subject's Duty.

But leaving Our Adversaries to be Condemn'd by Themselves, and Confuted out of their Own Mouths; I shall proceed to prove, that Religion is the firmest Foundation of Government.

The Subject's Allegiance is universally thought to be then most strongly secur'd, when it is ratified and confirm'd by an Oath. And an Oath derives all its Force from Religion, and is one of the Highest and most Sacred Parts of it. It is a Solemn Appeal to God, and publickly calls upon him to bear Witness to the Truth of our Promise, or Punish us for the Breach and Falshood of it. And when the Promise is made to his Vicegerent we appeal to Him, who alone is Superior to Kings, and to whom only they are Accountable.

God himself has been pleas'd (if I may so

speak)

ſpeak) to bind himſelf with an Oath; and *becauſe He could Swear by no Greater, He Sware by Himſelf.* Heb. 6.13

Men verily Swear by the Greater, even by him who is the Fountain and Fullneſs of Power. And while Religion has any Influence over them, they *will not alter the thing that is gone out of their Lips*, ſince God has ſet before them ſo Engaging an Example, and *to ſhew the Immutability of his Counſel, confirm'd it by an Oath.* ver. 16. ver. 17.

But were there no God to Puniſh us, no Providence to Watch over us; or were it Poſſible to reject the Belief of both; an Oath would be no more than a Ludicrous Trifle, cover'd with a Mock-ſolemnity; and our Addreſſes to Heaven would be as vain, as the Repeated Invocations of the Deluded Prieſts of *Baal.*

Religion conſiſts in an Acknowledgment of God, as Governour of the World: and whoſoever believes that *The moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men*, muſt alſo believe that *He giveth it to whomſoever he will.* And though the Power be Lodg'd in Earthen Veſſels, or exercis'd by Perſons Infinitely Inferior to him, yet it is deriv'd from him, and *there is no Power but of God.* This Religious Senſe of a Providential Government, will incline the Subject to pay an aweful Reverence to his Prince, becauſe it reaches farther than his own Perſon, and is ultimately referr'd to that Divine Original, whoſe Image and Repreſentative He is. And Dan. 4.25 Rom. 13 1

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He chiefly Repreſents him in the Glorious Attributes of Goodneſs and Power; the one, *a Terror to Evil Doers*, the other, an Encouragement to the Righteous.

And whilſt God is preſent with us in the Perſon of his Vice-gerent; The ſame Religion that makes us dutiful to God Himſelf, will alſo put us in mind of Our Duty to him, who acts in his Stead, and diſpenſes Rewards and Puniſhments in his Name. Our Obſervation of our Prince's Laws, will proceed from a due Regard to the ſupream Lawgiver; and whilſt we *render unto Cæſar the Things that are Cæſar's*, we ſhall by ſo doing *render unto God, the Things that are God's.*

Mat. 22. 21.

Religion fixes our Duty to our Sovereign upon a Certain Baſis, and derives our Obedience from the Nobleſt Motives, not from a Slaviſh Fear, not from an Occaſional Humour, not from a Mercenary Regard to Temporal Intereſt, but from a Filial Love and Reſpect to the Lord of Glory. Even in the Loweſt Station, and the Meaneſt Employment of Life, Religion grounds the Performance of Duty, on a Foundation that reaches up to Heaven; it inclines Servants to perform it, upon that diſtinguiſhing Principle, which is the Life of every Virtue, and the *Sweet-ſmelling Savour* of all our Sacrifices, even *Singleneſs of Heart.* It withdraws them from the ſordid Views of pleaſing Men, and the ſelfiſh, diſingenuous Principles that regard only an outward Appearance;

Eph. 6. 5.

pearance; and raiſes them to a Glorious Ambition, and a Generous Endeavour, to Pleaſe *their Maſter which is in Heaven.*

And if Religion thus improves and ennobles the Duty of Servants to an Inferior Maſter, how much Greater Influence will it have on our Duty, to the Supream Magiſtrate?

As he is Nearer to God, and more Immediately bears his Character; So we ſhall pay our Obedience to him, as if God were directly to receive it, and were to offer himſelf to our view.

And the Diſpenſations of Juſtice and Mercy, that proceed from an Earthly Throne, will almoſt as deeply affect us, as if they came from the Mercy-ſeat, or the Tribunal of Eternal Judgment.

An aweful Regard to God, and a prevailing Senſe of Religion, poſſeſſes the Subject with that Juſtice and Fidelity, which cannot be ſhaken by any Temptation, but ſtands unmov'd againſt the aſſaults of Danger, and the allurements of Intereſt.

It was This Senſe of Religion which prevail'd in the Minds of the Firſt Followers of Chriſt, while the Holy Fire that came down from Heaven was yet burning with the Pureſt Flame, and *e'er the Lamp of God* wax'd dim in the Church of Chriſt.

There was no occaſion for any Obligation beſide the Chriſtian's Word or Promiſe; This alone was a ſufficient Security, and indeed the Strongeſt that could be given;

For

For it ſtood faſt like the Word of God; and was a ſolid, ſtable Foundation.

And even the worſt of Princes, Heathen, Perſecuting Tyrants, might entirely have Built their Confidence upon it, and Laid themſelves down in Safety, in the Arms of the Perſecuted Chriſtians.

And as their Numbers increas'd, there was a daily addition to their Princes ſtrength: more Hands were lifted up to Pray for the Publick Peace, and bring down the Bleſſings of Heaven upon thoſe that *deſpitefully us'd* and evil-intreated them.

When the Wiſeſt Lawgivers have fram'd the ſtricteſt Bands of Duty, and ſtudied to multiply Obligations upon the Subject, a Good Conſcience has ſtill the ſtrongeſt Tie upon Him, and Obliges with the Greateſt Force. While This is ſeated on its Throne, and maintains its Juſt Authority, it continually Inculcates and Enforces Obedience; and is a ſurer Defence to the ſovereign Power, than all the Enſigns of State, than all the Guards that ſurround the Throne.

But when Conſcience is depos'd, and Religion trampled upon, then Treachery and Faithfulneſs are Confounded. The Cloſeſt Obligations are craftily evaded, and it is hard to bind the Traitor, even with Chains.

Whilſt I am endeavouring to recommend a ſtedfaſt Integrity, I cannot be ignorant, how often it is Cenſur'd, as rough and untractable; as Guilty of Perverſeneſs and Obſtinacy, and unwilling to Comply with the Sovereign's Commands. And

And it muſt be confeſs'd, that Integrity is too ſtubborn to waver with every Wind, and will not yield up it ſelf to every Demand. But yet it preſerves our Duty inviolable, and either readily Obeys, or patiently Suffers. And the Righteous Man, having his Duty always in view, and acting with a conſtant Regard, to one great Important End, muſt at length be eſteem'd and valued, becauſe He is ever the ſame, and under every Change of Affairs, has an unalterable reſpect to Virtue.

He may at an Inconvenient Time Diſpleaſe, becauſe He will not *Conform* to the Faſhions of the World: But his Virtue will obtain a fix'd and certain Approbation, when it has ſeen an infinite Variety of Corrupt Faſhions paſs away; and will ſhine *as the fine Gold*, when it has kept it ſelf Pure and Unmix'd, even in the midſt of a General Corruption.

The Enemies of Government are ſenſible of the Security which it receives from Religious Principles, and therefore endeavour to deſtroy them, that it may be depriv'd of this excellent Defence. And having Labour'd in vain to eraſe the Diſtinguiſhing Senſe of Good and Evil, and root out the Principles that were deeply planted by a Good Education; They now endeavour to prevent their Entrance into the Minds of Men, and deny the Growing Generation the Benefits of Inſtruction, that the Notions of Virtue may not be Infus'd into their Breaſts.

And could their Endeavours prevail, *the Seed-Time* of Religion would ceaſe, and the Unhappy Youth of this Nation would be ſent forth, in their Tender Age, into a Foreign Land, that they might never be acquainted with our Doctrine or Worſhip, but only be Taught to abhor a Corrupt and Erroneous Religion, and then believe that Religion it ſelf is nothing elſe but Corruption and Error.

Being thus without Principles, and without God in the World, and therefore *Unſtable in all their Ways*, They would be fit to comply with the vileſt Meaſures, and have no check to reſtrain them from Going to the utmoſt Extent of Iniquity.

But how much ſoever this Admir'd Policy may promote the wicked Deſigns of Subtle Stateſmen, yet it can never maintain the True Intereſt of Government. For without Religion there is no certain Obligation upon the People. They may perhaps pretend to Loyalty, and make the faireſt Shows of Obedience, while they receive Advantages from the Favour of their Sovereign, or while their Capricious Humour continues in one Point: But as ſoon as it varies from it (and ſoon it will) or as ſoon as their Prince withdraws the Tokens of his abus'd Favour, their Profeſſions of Duty will vaniſh away; and They will Immediately ſubvert the Throne, Who ſo Lately Pretended to ſupport it.

That Obedience only is fix'd and certain, which proceeds from a Senſe of Religion, and

and is Perform'd *for Conſcience ſake*. And the ſovereign Power can never be endanger'd by the truly-Good Chriſtian, who never deviates from his Duty, nor approaches to Sin, upon any Conſideration whatſoever. The faithful Diſcharge of his Duty to God, is attended with a conſtant regard to all the Offices of Life, and has a prevailing Influence over him, as a Subject, a Neighbour, and a Friend.

The Fear of God is ſo Powerful a Principle of Action, that it neceſſarily produces happy Effects; and is ſo mighty a reſtraint from Sin, that it almoſt ſuperſedes the neceſſity of any other reſtraint.

When *Joſeph* entered into Conditions with his Brethren, he ſtrengthened and ſecur'd his Engagement, with this aſſurance, *I fear God.* Ge. 42.18.

This Plainly intimated the Veracity of his Promiſes, and the Certainty of his Performance, ſince the Fear of God would not Permit him to Fail.

It was the Integrity of *Joſeph* which, under God, inclin'd *Potiphar* to put an abſolute Confidence in him, and *make him Overſeer of his Houſe, and all that He had.* Gen. 39 4.

And ſo Juſtly did *Joſeph* anſwer this abſolute Confidence, that no Temptation could move him to vio'ate his Truſt. Tho' he was ſolicited from Time to Time, to Injure him in his neareſt Relation; and the Temptation was enforc'd with Secrecy and Safety; yet he poſitively refus'd to comply

with the ſinful *Requeſt that was made to him, day by day*; and gave this Faithful Anſwer to the Wife of *Potiphar*; *Behold my Maſter wotteth not what is with me in the Houſe, and He hath committed all that He hath to my Hand. There is None greater in this Houſe than I, neither hath he kept back any thing from Me, but Thee, becauſe Thou art his Wife: how then can I do this great Wickedneſs and Sin againſt*
Ge. 39 8,9 *God?*

This Conſideration was an effectual Guard and Defence againſt the violent Aſſaults of Sin; and though it endeavour'd to come in upon him, *like a wide Breaking in of Waters*, yet its Violence was check'd with this Impartial Reaſoning, and *its Proud Waves were Stay'd.*

When He was falſely accus'd, *and caſt into Priſon, a Place where the King's Priſoners were bound*, ſuch was the Effect of his Integrity, that *the Keeper of the Priſon committed to Joſeph's hand, all the Priſoners that were in the Priſon, and whatſoever They did there, He was the Doer of it.* The Keeper fear'd not his Eſcape, nor ſuſpected that he could ever betray his
Ge. 39. 20. Truſt, and therefore *Look'd not to any Thing*
22, 23. *that was under his hand.*

The ſame Principles poſſeſs'd the Heart of *David*, and kept him Stedfaſt in his Duty, when the Injurious Behaviour of *Saul* almoſt ſeem'd to cancel all Engagements, and diſſolve the Relation between the Subject and the King. His Conſcience told him that it could not be diſſolv'd, and oblig'd him to Protect

his

his unnatural Enemy, though his Servants prompted him to embrace the opportunity of Deſtroying him; and all the Motives to Revenge preſented themſelves before Him. *He ſtayed his Servants*, and govern'd his Paſſion, with theſe mighty words, *The Lord forbid that I ſhould do this thing to my Maſter, the Lord's Anointed, to ſtretch forth my hand againſt* him, ſeeing he is the Anointed of *the Lord.*

Nor did he only avoid this opportunity of Revenge; but He again watch'd over and preſerv'd his Injurious Sovereign, when all his Guards, and even his Fears and Suſpicions were aſleep.

Such is the Fidelity that proceeds from Religion!

And we may behold it in one Inſtance more, in *Daniel, greatly Belov'd*, an Iſraelite rais'd from a State of Captivity, to be near the Throne of *Babylon*, and only Leſs than the King.

Would the Time Permit me, I could dwell upon this great Example, to admire the amiable Goodneſs that ſhone forth from this glorious Height, when he was *the firſt of the Three Preſidents that were ſet over an Hundred and Twenty Princes.*

His Faithfulneſs continued untainted, even in an Idolatrous Court, and ſtood the Teſt of the ſevereſt Examination, ſo that Malice and Envy *could find none Occaſion againſt him, nor Fault; foraſmuch as there was not any Error or Fault found in him*, and his Prejudic'd Adverſaries were forc'd to confeſs, that *they*

could not find any Occaſion againſt this Daniel, except They found it againſt Him, concerning the Law of His God.

How Happy was the Man, whoſe only Crime was Religion! and How ſecure the Throne that was ſupported by ſo Faithful a Miniſter!

And if the Religion of the Subject Eſtabliſhes the Throne, it muſt receive a yet firmer Security from the Religion of the Sovereign. And indeed the Sovereign ought to encourage Religion, ſince his Happineſs depends ſo much upon it. And the Example of a Prince does greatly encourage it, and give Strength and Authority to it.

Righteouſneſs lifts up its Head with an undaunted Chearfulneſs, and appears *in its full Strength*, when it enjoys the Benefits of his Protection; and Wickedneſs is abaſh'd and aſham'd, and its Inſolent Confidence is turn'd to Confuſion; *for a King that ſitteth in the Throne of Judgment, ſcattereth away all Evil with his Eyes.* His Piety renders his Laws effectual, and is it ſelf, a prevailing Law. The Hearts of Men are wrought upon and deeply affected by it, and delight to pay an Obedience to it. For Goodneſs attracts the Love and Admiration of Mankind, even when it appears in a meaner Station, and adorns a low Eſtate. And its Influence is much more engaging, when it is ſeated on a Throne, and diſplays it ſelf from ſo advantageous a Situation. It adds a Dignity even to Majeſty it ſelf, and caſts a Glory round the Crown. When

When the King acknowledges his Dependance on a Superior Power, and humbles himſelf in Prayer before an Heavenly Sovereign; and when the Miniſters of his Court declare with United Voices, that *Both Riches and Honours come from God, and He Reigneth over all.* This Reverent Submiſſion gives us a Lively Idea of the Daily Service of thoſe Perfect Spirits that *worſhip him that Liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne.*

The Throne reſembles *the Mercy-Seat*, when the Power of the Prince is exercis'd in Works of Juſtice and Mercy. This gives him a Glorious Name, the deſirable Title, of Father of his People, or (which is yet Greater) Father of the Poor. His Righteouſneſs cloathes and adorns him more than *the Ornaments of Gold upon his Apparel*; and *his Judgment is as a Robe, and a Diadem.*

The Righteouſneſs of the Prince not only makes his Days Proſperous, and his Reign Happy; but extends its Influence beyond the Time of his Life, and continues to bleſs his People after his Departure from them.

And we ſtill enjoy the fruits of Righteouſneſs, which were ſhed upon us by our Late moſt Gracious Sovereign.

Becauſe *her Hands were lifted up* in Devout Supplications to the Almighty, Therefore did our Armies Prevail. *Her Alms fought for us againſt our Enemies, better than a mighty Shield and ſtrong Spear.* The Children of the Poor, receiv'd their Daily Food,

and neceſſary Inſtruction from her. The Orphans were adopted by *One Greater than Pharaoh's Daughter:* And the Royal Mother delighted to give this affectionate Charge, *Take this Child, and Nurſe it for me.*

The Breaſts of her Charity gave Suck to Thouſands of Helpleſs Infants; and *the riſing Generation* will know their Duty, becauſe ſhe *bred them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.*

May every Ear that hears her Name, for ever Bleſs it. May the Grateful Remembrance of Her never die. And may every Prince that ſits upon her Throne, ſtudy to make Himſelf and his People Happy, by imitating her Glorious Example!

Having endeavour'd to ſhew that Righteouſneſs eſtabliſhes the Throne, and moſt effectually anſwers the End and Deſign of Government; Let me,

Secondly, Guard againſt thoſe Pernicious Principles that ſubvert the Throne, and are deſtructive of Government.

I have detain'd you ſo long already, that I can barely mention them; but, Barely to mention them is enough to make you abhor them.

The Firſt; and moſt Obvious, are thoſe Pernicious Principles, that remove the Foundations of Religion, and deny the Being of a God. Could theſe abſurd Opinions prevail, Fidelity and Juſtice would ceaſe, and the diſtinction between Right and Wrong would

would be loſt in Confuſion. The Properties of Men would have no Fence to Secure them, and the Precarious Title to an Inheritance would be reſolv'd into Preſent Poſſeſſion. Power to obtain and defend it, would give the only Right, and that would continue only, till a Stronger Power could take it away. There would be no Reſtraint from Injuries, but Temporary Convenience; no Obligation to Peace and Quietneſs, but Occaſional Intereſt and Advantage. The Largeſt Property would be the moſt Inviting Temptation, and therefore the Poſſeſſion of a Crown, the moſt dangerous Poſſeſſion.

The Zealous Advocates for an Imaginary State of Nature, may eaſily conjecture what Diſorders would ariſe from a Lawleſs, Atheiſtical People. War and Deſtruction would ſpread it ſelf over every fair Ground, every goodly Inheritance; and the whole World would become *a Field of Blood.*

It is the Intereſt of every Prince and People to put a Stop to theſe Fatal Principles; and not only to diſcourage Atheiſm it ſelf, but every Approach towards it.

It may indeed be impoſſible that Atheiſm ſhould entirely prevail; but the Throne is Shaken and Endanger'd by Profaneneſs and Irreligion. For while the Subjects have Looſe and Impious Notions of God, and ſpeak Contemptibly of him, they cannot duly reverence their Sovereign, or be ſtrictly bound in their Allegiance to Him.

It

It is alſo to be fear'd that a Scornful Neglect of God the Son, and an avow'd Denial of his Divinity, may Produce as Dreadful Effects, as even the Denial of God the Father. If we renounce the Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, the Authority of Reveal'd Religion is abſolutely Cancell'd; and if we fall into Deiſm, we ſhall not be very Remote from Atheiſm it ſelf. And whatſoever Profeſſions of Loyalty may be made by the Accurſed Authors of theſe Principles, they cannot proceed from a Juſt Regard to their Duty, but from a Subtle Deſign to recommend their Wicked Opinions.

We are alſo to guard againſt Thoſe Republican Doctrines, which Derive all Power from the People.

This ill-grounded Aſſertion, that Kings receive their Authority from their Subjects, is highly Injurious to God, and diſclaims and caſts off his Government of the World. It attempts to Depoſe *the God of Order*, and ſet up in his Stead, an unruly Multitude, the Authors of Confuſion.

A Sincere Reſpect to our Sovereign is inconſiſtent with this vain Opinion; for it cannot riſe any higher than the Fountain of his Power; and ſince that is ſuppos'd to riſe from the very Dregs of Mankind, they muſt neceſſarily have but a low Eſteem for him. They cannot pay Homage and Deference to their own Creature, or fall down before the Work of their own Hands.

Having made themſelves the Proprietors of

of Power, and their Prince, no more than the Steward and Manager of it, they will pleaſe themſelves with a wanton Diſpoſal of the Stewardſhip, and turn him out of it, whenſoever their uncertain Humour prompts them to it.

The Papal Inſolence and Tyranny has been Juſtly abhorr'd for removing and pulling down Kings, at its arbitrary Pleaſure. And the Inſolence of the People would be yet more Intolerable, if this Doctrine ſhould obtain in the World, and every Kingdom would be ſubject to an Innumerable Multitude of Tyrants.

There is yet another Principle which ought to be avoided, as deſtructive of Government, namely, That which makes an Abſolute Allowance to the Sincerity of every Man's Perſwaſion, and places the whole of Religion, and the great Affair of Eternal Salvation, upon the Authority of every Private Judgment.

I ſhall not now inſiſt upon its contradicting an Article of our Church, which the Authors of it have frequently Subſcribed to: I ſhall not Endeavour to ſhew how fruitful it is of Erroneous Sects, and Impious Hereſies, and how numerous a Spawn of Licentious Opinions muſt proceed from it: But ſhall only Inſiſt upon the Pernicious Influence it has upon the State.

If the Sincerity of Mens preſent Perſwaſions will Juſtify them in all their Conſequences, the more Strongly they are perſwaded,

ſo

ſo much the more abundantly will they be Juſtified. And if they are hurried on to the Commiſſion of any evil Action; the Strength of the Impulſe will Sanctify the Crime. And if They think it their Duty to Overturn the Government, or (which I mention with Horror) to Murder their Sovereign, This unwarrantable Opinion will abett and animate them in their Pernicious Practices; and encourage them to commit theſe Abominable Iniquities *with greedineſs.*

Let it therefore be our conſtant Endeavour, to check the Growth of theſe fatal Principles.

Let us poſſeſs our ſelves with a juſt Value for our happy Conſtitution, and as we tender our Private Intereſts, Let us zealouſly promote the Publick Welfare.

Let us Support the Monarchy by the Principles of our excellent Church; and Let us beſeech God to continue them Both, a Defence and Support to each other.

Let Peace and Concord be (as it has always been) the Ornament of this Place: and, Let us ſhew our regard to Government, by diſcharging our Duty to God, for *the Throne is eſtabliſh'd by Righteouſneſs:*

Which That it may alway be, God of his infinite Mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The Inſinuations of the Tempter Falſe, and Pernicious to Human Liberty.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex:*

GEN. III. 4, 5.

And the Serpent ſaid unto the Woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die.

For God doth know, that in the Day ye eat thereof, then your Eyes ſhall be open'd: and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.

THE Immediate Succeſs of this Temptation, and the Fatal Conſequences of it, lead us to enquire into its Nature and Force.

It was offer'd by the great Deceiver to the Mother of Mankind, whilst She as yet enjoy'd her Innocence, and bore the lively Image of her Maker.

This subtle Spirit was throughly acquainted with the Arts of Insinuation, and knew the most proper Method of applying himself to her, and the most likely way to obtain a favourable Hearing.

This once glorious Being, with an innumerable Company of Angels, *fell from their first Estate, into the Land of Darkness* and Misery, through Pride and Ambition: And being moved with Envy at the Happiness of Man, The Lord of the new Creation; He was willing to believe, that he might undermine his Happiness, by the same Temptation, and make his Pride *an occasion of Falling.*

To accomplish this accursed Design, he puts on the Form of *a Serpent, that was more Subtil than any Beast of the Field*; and drawing near to our Common Parent, he pretends to enquire into her State and Condition, Whether the Creator had given her an unlimited Power, to enjoy all the Fruits of the Garden, or whether he had made any Reserve.

Gen. 2. 1.

The Woman naturally returns a suitable Answer to his Enquiries, giving a particular Account of the Divine Bounty, and also of the Reserve of one Only Tree, adding withal, that if she presum'd *to Touch it, she should Die.*

Gen. 3. 3.

The

The Tempter preſently charges her with a vain and credulous Fear, Laughs at the Prohibition, as an unreaſonable Reſtraint, and the Penalty denounc'd, as an impotent Threatning. He encourages her to entertain Injurious Notions of God, and believe that his Decree was a Partial and Arbitrary Impoſition, contriv'd only to keep her, and her Husband in Darkneſs, and prevent their Riſing to an Equality with him, in Wiſdom and Knowledge.

When ſhe heard this Flattering Repreſentation made, by a ſeeming Friend, with a Pretended Regard to her Intereſt, for the Enlargement of her Liberty, and Improvement of her Knowledge; ſhe open'd her Heart to receive the Fatally-pleaſing Inſinuation, and gather'd the Fruit that was Beautiful *to the Eye*, and full of the Treaſures of Wiſdom.

But her Experience quickly told her, that *in much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that in-creaſeth Knowledge, increaſeth Sorrow.* Eccl. 1. 18

The Eyes of our Firſt Parents *are Open'd*; but it is only to Behold *their Nakedneſs.* They are Troubled at the Preſence of the Lord their God, and afraid to hear *the Voice* of their Maker.

The Trees of the Garden, that were their pleaſant Shade, are now but a vain and imperfect Screen to hide Them from his Face. *The Ground is accurſed* for the ſake of their Sin: and the Fruits of it, are *eaten in Sorrow. Thorns and Thiſtles it brings forth*, to weary

weary the Strength of Man; and He Toils and Labours to sustain Himself, and Earns his dear-bought Bread by *the Sweat of his Face.*

Gen. 3. 17, 18, 19.

Instead of being Equal with God, He hastens to return to Corruption, and *his Soul cleaveth to the Dust*, from whence He was Taken.

Ps. 119. 25

The unhappy Partner of his Guilt is Doom'd to Misery, and delivers down an Inheritance of Woe to her wretched Posterity.

She Conceives in Sorrow, and passes through a Multitude of Deaths, before She can bring her Children into Life: and every tender Mother derives from Her a dreadful Variety of Pangs and Agonies, and as often as she multiplies Conceptions, multiplies Sorrows.

Gen. 3. 16.

As soon as the fruitful Curse is pronounc'd, the condemn'd Criminals are driven out of Paradise, and dare not look towards that Happy Place, because the Entrance is guarded with *Cherubims, and a Flaming Sword.*

ver. 24.

Before them is a World of Misery, and they are Compass'd about with an Host of Evils, *with a Consumption and Fever, with Blasting and Mildew, with Pestilence, Famine and the Sword, with Madness and Blindness, and Astonishment of Heart.*

Deut. 28. 22. 28.

And before they have measur'd out *the Span of Life*, One of their Sons is slain by the unnatural Hand of His Brother; and the

the Other is *driven over the Face of the Earth, and hid from the Face of God, and is a Fugitive and a Vagabond*, flying from every Man, as his Enemy, and in vain endeavouring to fly from himſelf, as his greateſt Enemy. Gen. 4 14.

Behold, Theſe are the Fruits of Ambition! Theſe we gather from *the Tree that was pleaſant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be deſir'd to make one Wiſe!* Thus *our Eyes are open'd!* And Thus we *Become as Gods!* Gen. 3.

This fatal Experience, one might juſtly think, ſhould be enough to diſcourage us from a ſecond Attempt, and to defeat the Force of the Temptation.

But, Alas! The Enemy ſtill prevails by the ſame deceitful Means; and his Induſtrious Agents (who were never more Induſtrious than in this Vain-glorious Age) Reaſon in the ſame manner as their Maſter did, and mightily prevail with the Weapons of *the Great Deſtroyer*.

"Hath God (ſay They) reſtrain'd your Liberty by forbidding you to Taſt the Fruits of Sin? and hath he aſſur'd you that *if you do this, you ſhall Die?* Let not theſe arbitrary Injunctions ſet Bounds to your Will, or confine your Power of Acting.

Either he has forbidden theſe things, becauſe he Envies your Happineſs, and will not permit you to enjoy them, leſt you ſhould be as Happy as Himſelf; Or perhaps you are Impos'd upon, by a falſe Report of his Laws, and he has not really enacted them: But They were contriv'd by ſome crafty

Priests, to gain Dominion over the credulous People: or they were publish'd by some Tyrannical Prince, to bind his Subjects in Chains, and keep them in entire Subjection.

You have heard, indeed, that *you should Surely Die*, if you ventur'd to Indulge your selves in Pleasures; and have strook a Damp upon the Comforts of Life, by the Expectation of a Future State, and the Fears of Damnation. But these are vain and groundless Fears, instill'd into you in the Weakness of Infancy, confirm'd by the Prejudices of Education, and daily inculcated and improv'd by a Mercenary Sett of Men, that gain by your Credulity, and frighten you into a Compliance with their Demands.

But, *Quit your selves like Men, Be strong*; cast off the Shackles that have been bound upon you; and learn to Think and Reason freely. Let not Religion any longer enslave you: or if you think it convenient to Profess some Sort of Religion; Let every Man believe as he pleases, and be his own Priest and King: For this is your natural Right, which neither the Civil Magistrate, nor the Pretended Ministers of God should ever encroach upon.

Let not the vain Distinctions of Good and Evil trouble you with imaginary Scruples: But boldly perswade your selves, that Right and Wrong are the same, and there is no difference *between Him that Sweareth, and him that feareth an Oath.*

Eccl. 9. 2.

Then you will be *as Gods*, and become

like

like one of the Princes. - We are born to deliver you from your ancient Bondage, and take off *the Yoke, which neither you, nor your Forefathers were able to bear.* We have found out the Cheat that has paſs'd upon the World, and detected the Perſons that contriv'd to delude it. And if you will embrace our generous Principles, you may yet eſcape out of Darkneſs and Ignorance, and be tranſlated into a glorious State of Liberty."

Thus do theſe Blaſphemers Reaſon, or pretend to Reaſon, and thereby deceive themſelves and others, to their Eternal Perdition.

It were hardly pardonable to repeat their Impious Words before a Chriſtian Aſſembly, or to defile this Sacred Place with their Treacherous Inſinuations, were it not neceſſary to detect their Fallacies, and put a Stop to theſe growing Evils.

Hard indeed it is, that the Certainty of the Goſpel ſhould be daily queſtion'd, after a Trial of Seventeen Hundred Years; and we ſhould be forc'd to *lay again the Foundation that has ſtood ſure for ſo many Ages*, and to inculcate the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity, as if they were but juſt publiſh'd to the World.

But the Perverſeneſs of Men compels us to maintain the Validity of our Great Charter, and to aſſert its Truth and Authority, notwithſtanding it has been often aſſerted, and juſtly maintain'd.

O Lord, thy Word endureth for ever in Heaven: But theſe Deceivers treat it with Con- *Pſ.* 119.89

tempt, as if it were weak and unstable as the
ver. 90. Waters. *Thy Truth remaineth from one Generation to another; thou hast laid the Foundation of it deeper than the Foundations of the Earth*; and it shall *abide* and continue unmoveable, when that glorious Building, the World, shall be dissolv'd. *The Sun shall be darkned,*
Matt. 24. 29 *and the Moon shall not give her Light; the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken:* But thy Holy Ordinances shall remain to all Eternity; and the different Characters of Good and Evil, shall never pass away.

Ps. 19. 14. May thy Holy Spirit direct *the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditations of my Heart,* while I endeavour to shew,

First, That the Suggestions of Infidelity are False. And,

Secondly, That they enslave the Sons of Men, instead of setting them at Liberty.

And, *First*, It is suggested, that Religion is a Cheat invented by Subtlety, and enforc'd by Power. This Suggestion is not only False, but impossible to be True. For we find the Belief of a God is in all the Corners of the World, and spread over all the Families of the Earth. *There is neither*
Ps. 19. 3, 4. *Speech nor Language, but* his Name *is heard among them. Its Sound is gone out into all Lands,* and reaches *to the Ends of the World:* Nor has it lately extended it self, but universally prevail'd

prevail'd in the earlieſt Ages, and has maintain'd its Poſſeſſion from one Age to another. No Nation or People *has been hid* from the Knowledge of it. The moſt Stupid and Ignorant have receiv'd it, and the moſt Wiſe and Prudent have always retain'd it.

It has not only been communicated to Countries bordering upon one another, but to the moſt diſtant Regions that held no Correſpondence with each other; and has reach'd farther than the moſt extenſive Trade, or the wideſt Conqueſts.

If Religion were a Cheat, how could we account for this Early, this Laſting, this Univerſal Poſſeſſion?

Who was the firſt Deceiver? *The Father of this* ſucceſsful *Lie.* What Means did he uſe to ſpread the Deluſion? Or how did he captivate and enſlave the Minds of Men? How could Prieſt-Craft prevail, before there was any Religion profeſs'd, or any Belief of a God? In what Age or Country did the Deceiver live? What Princes Favour did he enjoy? Or how did he poſſeſs his deluded Prince with an Opinion, that the Religious Cheat would promote his Intereſt?

And if his Prince were thus perſwaded, How did he *bring every Thought* of his Subjects *into Captivity* to this new Opinion? But if his Subjects were eaſily ſubdued, How did he diffuſe the ſame Belief into every Country of the World? How did he impart it to People and Nations that he never ſaw or heard of?

Did the Error pass in an Instant from one End of the Earth to the other, or was it propagated by Degrees? Did a sudden Fear seize at once upon all Mankind, and the Alarm surprize every Kingdom with the Swiftness of a Thought, and bring them into Subjection in a Moment?

Were the neighbouring Princes let into the Secret, or were they equally deceiv'd with other Men? If they were acquainted with the Cheat, Why did not they discover it to their Posterity? Why are the greatest of Sovereigns enslav'd by Religion, as well as the Meanest of their Vassals? And, Why do they fear and tremble in the Midst of their Feasts and Triumphs?

If Religion be a State-Contrivance, Why is it not taken up and laid down at Pleasure? Why is it suffer'd to obstruct the Measures of Ambitious Men? Why does it clog *their Chariot-Wheels*, and controul their Power?

If it be a Secret lodg'd in the Breast of the Priests, How is it preserv'd amongst so large a Number, so great a Variety of Men? How comes it to pass, that the Combination was never broken, the Trust never betray'd by *False Brethren?* Was there never a *Judas* to divulge the Fraud? Have they been always Faithful to each other? and, Has no Difference, no Bribe tempted or provok'd them to discover it? Are there not Men of Loose Opinions, and Atheistical Dispositions, even *in the House of our Friends?* And is there not Reason to suppose, that some of them would

would pull off the Maſque, and open the Secret that has been hid from Ages?

Theſe, and many more Queſtions might be offer'd to our modern Infidels, which they can never Anſwer, and therefore ſhould no longer continue in Infidelity.

But it is farther ſuggeſted by Theſe Wicked Men, that Morality is only an empty Name; and the Diſtinction between Good and Evil is not Eſſential to the Nature of Things, but grounded only upon Imagination. This Impious Doctrine they endeavour to maintain; and would fain perſwade themſelves, that the Notions of Vice and Virtue are Falſe Prejudices and *Idle Tales* infus'd in our Infancy, and confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd by frequent Uſe. And if the Children of Men (ſay they) would generouſly exert themſelves, and enquire into theſe prevailing Opinions, they would find them as groundleſs and uncertain, as any other Cuſtoms of their Country.

Thus they perverſly argue; but notwithſtanding theſe Aſſertions, I will be bold to ſay, that Good and Evil were eternally different in their own Natures, and can never loſe their eſſential Properties, though theſe Libertines labour to alter their Names, and *call Evil, Good; and Good, Evil.*

Beſide thoſe poſitive Laws, that derive their Authority from the expreſs Command of God, or his Vicegerent, and which relate only to indifferent Matters, which would ſtill have remain'd Indifferent, had they not

been commanded or forbidden; there are other Laws of Eternal Obligation, depending upon the unchangeable Nature of God, and no more subject to change, than his infinite Perfections are. Even those that had never heard of the Revelation of God, nor seen the Law deliver'd to *Moses*, had yet *a Law written in the Table of their Hearts*, and having *no other Law, were a Law unto themRo. 2. 13, 14 selves; their Conscience bearing witness, and their Thoughts accusing, or excusing them*, as they observ'd, or neglected, the natural Principles of Right and Wrong.

If there were no Difference between *the Savour of* Abel's *Sacrifice*, and the unnatural Murder committed by *Cain*, *Why did* Cain's *Countenance fall?* Before the Almighty had reprov'd him, did not his Conscience tell
Gen. 4. him, that *if he did well he should be accepted; if he did not well, Sin would lie at the Door?* And did not his angry Judge reason with him afterwards on a Supposition, that he knew this certain Truth, and was convinc'd by his own Heart, of the Equity of the Divine Proceedings?

We must conclude, that *Judas* had offer'd Violence to Nature, and sear'd his Conscience, before he could prevail with himself *to betray his Lord and Master for Thirty Pieces of Silver*; and yet, tho' he attain'd to such a high Degree of Wickedness, yet the remaining Light of Reason shew'd him the Heinousness of his Guilt, and the Horror of it star'd in his Face. Tho' he was supported by

by *a Band of Men*, and by the Authority of *the Prieſts and Elders*, and was in full Poſſeſſion of the Reward of Iniquity; yet he could not bear theCharge that he brought againſt himſelf, but was condemn'd to immediate Perdition, by the irreſiſtible Force of his own Conviction. Matth. 27.

What aileth thee, O Belſhazzar, *that thy Countenance is chang'd, and thy Thoughts trouble thee?* Thou King of *Babylon*, that *the Joints of thy Loins are loos'd, and thy Knees ſmite one againſt another?* Art thou not exalted to the Higheſt Power, encompaſs'd *with Thouſands of thy Lords, thy Wives, and thy Concubines! and praiſing* thy mighty *Gods of Gold, and of Silver, of Braſs, of Iron, of Wood, and of Stone?* Whence then ariſes thy Fear? Is there any other God to puniſh thee? Is there any Difference between *the Veſſels of the Temple*, and any other Gold? Our modern Heroes in Infidelity would tell thee, there is none; but thine own Conſcience aſſures thee there is. Dan. 5.

But to indulge a while the vain Humour of theſe Men, we will ſuppoſe (pardon the Suppoſition) that it were no longer *an Abomination to Kings to commit Wickedneſs*; that the whole Order of Virtues were forbidden, and the whole Body of Vice eſtabliſh'd by Law; would theſe unnatural Laws deface the Difference between Virtue and Vice, or change our Opinion of Good and Evil? Were the moſt enormous Sins dignified and diſtinguiſh'd by all the Honours that the World could ſhed upon them, would they become

become truly Glorious, and be treated with real Esteem and Regard? would Virtue become shameful and ignominious? would it sculk and hide it self *in Dens and Caves of the Earth*, to conceal its *Confusion of Face?* would not the illustrious Criminal be condemn'd at his own Tribunal, and dread the Sentence of his impartial Breast, even in the midst of the loud Applauses of a corrupted Multitude? and would not Virtue lift up its Head, and bravely assert its own Honour, even in the lowest Place of the Dungeon; and under the heaviest Weight of Infamy that could be cast upon it? Could Theft or Murder ever obtain an unfeign'd Approbation? Could Ingratitude and Treachery procure the Love of Mankind? In answer to these Questions I may justly say, that Good and Evil depend not upon any arbitrary Law or Custom of Men; and our Judgment of them cannot be revers'd, or alter'd at our Pleasure; Evil would still be Evil, tho' it were adorn'd with the Glory of a Crown, and a Kingdom; or of all the Kingdoms of the World; and Good is founded on so sure and stable a Foundation, that it cannot be remov'd, *be the People never so impatient, be the Earth never so unquiet.*

Having shewn that the Suggestions of Infidelity are False, I proceed,

Secondly, to shew, That they enslave the Sons of Men, instead of setting them at Liberty.

As

As the Tempter knows the Methods of approaching to our Hearts, and gaining an Intereſt in our Affections, ſo he is thoroughly convinc'd, that Youth is fond of Liberty; and therefore eaſily perſwaded to caſt off any thing that ſeems to be a Reſtraint; and his unwearied Agents, perfectly commiſſion'd and inſtructed by him, repreſent the Condition of Young Men as irkſom and tedious, ſtraiten'd and confin'd by the injurious Severity of Parents or Guardians; and as ſoon as they are capable of acting for themſelves, they endeavour to perſwade them, that they have been kept in a State of Darkneſs, and denied the Enjoyment of thoſe agreeable Pleaſures, which Old Men can no longer enjoy, and therefore through Envy deny to thoſe who are capable of Enjoyment.

Purſuant to this Scheme of Liberty, they tell them, the Articles of Faith are only Bands and Shackles contriv'd to confine Reaſon it ſelf, to controul their generous Will, and cramp and ſubdue their Affections; and if they would once bravely ſhake off their Fetters, and amend or cancel the Articles of Faith, then they might drink to the full of Pleaſure, and obtain an abſolute Dominion within themſelves.

Let us therefore ſuppoſe them to be influenc'd by this Show of Reaſoning, and behold them in Poſſeſſion of this imaginary Liberty. When they have laugh'd away the Articles of Religion, ſuperſeded the Dictates of Reaſon, and trampled upon the Power of Con-

Conſcience, are they then really free? Are they not compel'd to believe the groſſeſt Abſurdities, becauſe they will not believe in God? Are they not enſlav'd to their own ſingular Opinions, while they pretend to the extraordinary Privilege of Thinking freely? Are they not liable to ſudden Fears, even in the Midſt of their loudeſt Laughter? And does not their Conſcience often awake to torment them?

But ſuppoſing their Reaſon and Conſcience were entirely ſubdued, they have chang'd their Maſter indeed, but yet they are Slaves, inſtead of following the Guidance of Reaſon, they are forc'd to ſubmit to the violent Commands of an irregular Will, and are carried to and fro by their perverſe Affections. Every Paſſion has an arbitrary Power over them; and whilſt they are drawn ſeveral Ways by their impetuous Deſires, they are *ſawn aſunder* by different Luſts.

Covetouſneſs will hardly permit them to anſwer the Neceſſities of Nature, and yet Intemperance requires an immediate Compliance with its extravagant Demands.

Ambition puts them upon the utmoſtStretch, to reach after thoſe vain Objects that are plac'd above them, and at the ſame Time makes them ſtoop to the meaneſt Practices, and grovel in the Mire to compaſs its wicked Deſigns.

Their *Pride* gives them the quickeſt Senſe of every Appearance of an Injury, and lays them at the Mercy of every ſeeming Provocation;

cation; and tho' *in this Life only they have Hope*, yet they muſt hazard This their only Hope, to procure Satisfaction for every trifling Affront.

Drunkenneſs allows them no Reſpite or Abatement, but over-powers their Faculties with continual Draughts. It will not ſuffer them to wait till their Appetite returns, or allow them the Pleaſure of allaying natural Thirſt; it ſwallows like *the Grave*, and can no more be ſatisfied than *Hell and Deſtruction*, *which are never full.* Having overwhelm'd them in Pollution, it will not permit them to lift up their Heads, or recover an Opportunity of Thinking, leſt they ſhould repent. Pr. 27. 20.

Their Condition reſembles the wretched Fate of *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, when *an Holy One came down from Heaven, and pronounc'd the Sentence, Let his Heart be chang'd from Man's, and let a Beaſt's Heart be given unto him.* Dan. 4. 13, 16.

And the Sins of *Uncleanneſs* lay at leaſt an equal Weight upon them, and bring them under the heavieſt Yoke of Bondage. The firſt Compliance with them weakens their Power, and every Repetition gives their Vices a greater *Dominion over them.* They are no longer capable of *chooſing Good, or refuſing Evil*, but are given up to the entire Diſpoſal of *that Evil Spirit*, that *poſſeſſes* them. Though *the Houſe of the ſtrange Woman is the Way to Hell*, tho' *her Paths go down to the Chambers of Death*, yet they daily bind Pr. 7. 27.

them-

themselves faster in her Chains, and shut the Doors of their Prison, that they may not escape. They are not discourag'd at the dreadful Prospect; but are fond of embracing their treacherous Enemy, tho' *she*
Pr. 6. 26 *hath cast down many wounded, yea many strong Men have been slain by her.*

There cannot be a greater Proof of the Slavery of Sin, than the Difficulty of overcoming an evil Habit, and turning the Bent of this second Nature. They cannot pretend to expect the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, for they have mock'd at his Assistance, and denied his Being; and yet without his Aid the best of Men can do nothing.

How fruitless then are the Labours of those that are wearied with the Burthen of Wickedness, and yet cannot implore his Almighty Arm, to lift them up out of the Pit of Corruption! *Can the Rush grow up without*
Job 8. 11. *Mire? Can the Flag grow up without Water? Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? Or the Leo-*
Jer. 13. 23. *pard his Spots? Then may those that are accustom'd to do Evil,* break the Bands of Sin, without the Grace of God: And wretched is their Condition, if they cannot do it; as must be allow'd, *they themselves being Judges:* for were there no other Evil in Sin; yet it would be a deplorable Evil, as it produces Poverty, Sickness, and Pain: And this it certainly does, if frequently practic'd. Nature cannot endure its Service; the most hardy Sinners *bow down,* the bravest of the Sons of Wickedness *stoop* and faulter *under* it.

The

The Time will come when their uſual Temptations will find them unprepar'd for Enjoyment; their Affections will languiſh, as much as their Reaſon, and even their corrupted Will, will endeavour, but in vain, to decline its wonted Task, and be drawn heavily to the irkſom Performance of it. Lo! this is the Liberty obtain'd by Sin. In this curſed State they either do not think at all; and where then is their boaſted Freedom of Thought? or if they think, they upbraid, they accuſe, they condemn themſelves.

This then is the Subſtance of the Matter. By laying aſide the Articles of Faith, and caſting off the Obligations of Religion, by ſtifling their Reaſon, and ſearing their Conſcience, they loſe for a Time their Diſcernment of Danger, and their natural Fear of Evil; and ruſh with more Confidence, or (as they call it) with more Gallantry than other Men, into Diſgrace and Poverty, Diſeaſes and Death, and Hell.

Thus they aſſert their natural Privileges, and thus they maintain their Freedom! But, let them not glory in this their Happineſs, or think it a peculiar Caſe, for there are other Creatures that may juſtly vie with them, and may fairly pretend to an equal Degree of Courage and Gallantry. Even *the Ox that goes* unconcern'd *to the Slaughter*, and *the Horſe that ruſheth into the Battle*. Even when theſe mighty Champions do what they luſt, when *they ſpeak of wicked Blaſphemy, and their*

Ps. 73. 7, 8, 9. *their talking is against the most High*; when *they stretch forth their Mouth to the Heaven*; *and their Tongue goeth thro' the World*; in the Pride of this their Glory, *the Beast that perishes* is a nobler Creature; for *he paweth in the Valley, and rejoiceth in his Strength*; *he goeth on to meet the armed Men. He mocketh at* Job 39. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. *Fear, and is not affrighted*; *neither turneth he back from the Sword. The Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear, and the Shield. He swalloweth the Ground with Fierceness and Rage: neither believeth he, that it is the Sound of the Trumpet. He saith among the Trumpets, ha, ha, and he smelleth the Battle afar off, the Thunder of the Captains, and the Shouting.* Lord what is Man that he should thus debase Ps. 8. himself, *Man that was once in Honour, and but a little Lower than the Angels*, may, through his own Folly, or rather through the Affecta- Ps. 49. 20. tion of Wisdom, *be compar'd unto the Beasts that perish.*

The

The Manifeſtation of the Divine Glory.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. MARY'S.

EXOD. XXXIII. 18, 19.

And he ſaid, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy Glory.
And he ſaid, I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee.

GREAT was the Condeſcenſion of the Almighty, in vouchſafing to Speak to *ſinful Duſt and Aſhes!* Great alſo was his Mercy, in preſerving a People compaſs'd about with Infir-

mities, and *holding their Soul in Life*, when they heard him Speak out of the midſt of the Fire, and ſaw the Mountain Tremble at the Terrors of his Preſence.

But notwithſtanding this Mercy and Condeſcenſion, the People were juſtly afraid to hear his Voice a Second time, and behold another Manifeſtation of his Dreadful Majeſty: And it is not difficult to account for thoſe aſtoniſhing Fears, which bade them Stand afar off, when *Moſes* approach'd to the Lord of Glory.

But how ſhall we account for his drawing near to *the Thick Darkneſs where God was?* It was indeed in Obedience to the Divine Command. But how could mortal Man hope to enter into the Preſence of God, and Live? with what Words ſhall we expreſs, How ſhall we draw the Meaſure of that Goodneſs which enabled him to bear it!

Behold the God of Mercy and Compaſſion Speaks unto *Moſes Face to Face, as a Man Speaketh unto his Friend!* and the Meekeſt of Men was embolden'd to beſeech him, *to ſhew him his Glory*; and ſo Gracious was he to his righteous Servant, that he anſwer'd his Requeſt with this Declaration, *I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee.*

Though we cannot yet attain to this delightful View, and can gueſs but uncertainly at the Manner of this Manifeſtation, yet we cannot but deſire to partake with *Moſes*; tho' we are ſurrounded *with Clouds and thick Darkneſs*, yet we cannot but endeavour *to break*

break through, and gaze at that amiable Perfection which the Lord permitted *to paſs before him.* May the ſame Compaſſion, which guarded and ſtrengthned *Moſes*, while he beheld the Glory of the Divine Nature, pardon my Preſumption in attempting to explain this wonderful Part of the Sacred Hiſtory.

And, *Firſt*, I ſhall with Reverence enquire, Why he ſhew'd him only his Goodneſs, when he deſir'd to ſee his Glory.

Secondly, In what Senſe we may ſuppoſe that his Goodneſs paſs'd before him.

And, *Thirdly*, What Uſe we ſhould make of this gracious Diſpenſation.

And, *Firſt*, He might ſhew him only his Goodneſs, to intimate that his Goodneſs is his greateſt Glory. When we Speak of the Divine Perfections, it is indeed improper to ſay, that one is afore, or after other; one is greater or leſs than another: For ſince all are Infinite, they admit of no degrees of Compariſon, but are equally Glorious, equally exceed the Meaſure of our Capacities, and the Line of Human Reaſon. But the Almighty has been pleas'd to Stoop to our Weakneſs, and *Speak after the manner of Men*, in regard to our Infirmities. And ſince there is not a Word in our Tongue, that can juſtly expreſs the Majeſty of God, We may humbly hope, that *he will not be extreme*

to mark, the Abſurdity of our Thoughts, or Expreſſions, for we can but *Speak as a Child, and Think as a Child*, concerning him; and the Wiſeſt of Men is *Fooliſh and Ignorant, even as a Beaſt before him.*

Tho' Each of the Perfections of God is full of Glory, yet he ſeems to delight more particularly in his Goodneſs, and to illuſtrate and diſtinguiſh himſelf by the Exerciſe of it. It may be call'd his favorite Attribute, which he chooſes, which he rejoyces to preſent to us: the others demand our Reverence, but this engages our Love. With this he meets us in all our ways, and even conſtrains us to behold *the Light of his Countenance:* But the other he mercifully conceals, or ſhews but a little part of them; and turns away his Face from us, that he may hide his Terrors.

With his Goodneſs he looks graciouſly upon us, as upon the Camp of *Iſrael*, when he Led them Through the Sea; but with his other Perfections, he would be almoſt as dreadful to us as to the Hoſt of the *Egyptians*, *when he look'd through the pillar of fire, and troubled the Hoſt.* Ex. 14. 24.

His Goodneſs ariſes like *the Sun of Righteouſneſs with healing in its Wings*, and diſpenſes a mild and chearful Light, like the Beauty of the Morning, when *the Day breaks, and the Shadows flee away.*

It does not appear with a dazling Glory, *to ſtrike us down to the Earth, and ſmite us with Blindneſs*; or *with a Countenance like Lightning*,

Lightning, to make us Shake, and become as dead Men: but with the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs of *Joſeph*, when he Comforted his trembling Brethren with, *Behold your Eyes ſee; and the Eyes of my Brother Benjamin, that it is my Mouth that ſpeaketh to you*; and of a Greater than *Joſeph*, when he return'd from the Grave, to his afflicted Diſciples, Saying, *Why are ye troubled, and why do Thoughts ariſe in your Hearts, Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my Self.* Which leads me to another Reaſon, for which we may ſuppoſe, that the Almighty promis'd only to Shew his Goodneſs to *Moſes:* namely, Becauſe he was unable to bear the View of his other Perfections.

Ge. 45. 12.

Luk. 24. 38, 39.

The very Sight of his Power is enough to deſtroy the Mightieſt of the Sons of Men: It need not exert it Self againſt them, if it does but appear before them, they are Gone. His Word created the World out of Nothing, and can in an Inſtant reduce it to Nothing again. *With his Strength he ſet faſt the Mountains; and with the Breath of his Diſpleaſure they ſhall be ſcattered, and the Hills ſhall melt away.*

It was therefore in Compaſſion to the Weakneſs of *Moſes*, That *the Lord cover'd him with his Hand*, and ſpread his Shadow over him, that he might not periſh at the Sight of his Power, for *Great is his Power; yea, and his Wiſdom is Infinite.*

Pſ. 147. 5.

Human Reaſon, in its firſt Eſtate, bore but a faint Reſemblance of the Wiſdom of

God; and the Stream, that flow'd from *the Fountain of Light*, is now ſo groſsly Polluted, ſo full of Corruption, that it dares not behold its Divine Original; but is amaz'd and confounded, if it looks toward the Source from whence it ſprung. Our Thoughts and Conceptions ariſe from the uncertain Reports of our Senſes; our Judgments are biaſs'd by Prejudice; our poſitive Concluſions are no more than arbitrary Conjectures; and even our ſureſt Maxims of Wiſdom and Policy, are compaſs'd about with Darkneſs and Error; and the Eye of Reaſon, which is weak in it ſelf, muſt be much more weakned, if it attempts to Behold the piercing Light of Divine Wiſdom.

When God had pour'd down an extraordinary Meaſure of Wiſdom upon *Solomon*, it quite Over-power'd *the Queen of Sheba, and there was no more Spirit in her*, after She had Obſerv'd the excellent Underſtanding that was Shed upon him. And if there was ſo much Force in a Portion of Wiſdom, how much greater muſt there be in the Fulneſs of it? If that which was liable to Vanity and Sin, and which quickly loſt it Self in Wickedneſs and Folly, was an Object worthy of Admiration; How Wonderful is that Wiſdom, which *is ſubject to no Variableneſs, nor ſhadow of Turning!* If that which enabled him *to Go in and out before his great People, and Govern them prudently*, during a ſhort Space of Time, was a Gift preferable to long Life, Riches, and Honour. How

1 *Kings* 10.

ſhall

ſhall we ſufficiently Adore that infinite Wiſdom, which governs all the Nations; and by its unnerring Policy orders and diſpoſes all the Changes and Chances of the World, from the Beginning to the End of Time?

And Sinful Man is leſs capable of beholding the Holineſs, than the Wiſdom of God. The ſhameful Tokens of his Corruption are ſo plain upon him, and he is ſo defil'd with the Leproſy of Wickedneſs, that he cannot bear the Sight of Himſelf, and is conſcious of his Shame, even while the Darkneſs covers him. How then can he appear before a Pure and Holy God; or enter into that dreadful Preſence which would Shew him yet more plainly to himſelf; *It were eaſier for the Ethiopian to change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots*, than for the Sinner to lift up his Eyes to the Purity of the Divine Nature, and then reflect upon his own Filthineſs, without Horror and Confuſion?

Though Holineſs is in it ſelf an amiable Spectacle; and ſhines forth in Perfect Beauty; yet our preſent Frailty will not permit us to dwell upon ſo Glorious an Object; nor can we preſume to draw near to it, till we are waſh'd in the Blood of the Lamb, and *cloath'd with white Robes, which are the Righteouſneſs of the Saints.*

And the Divine Juſtice is an Object yet more dreadful: for this ſacred Attribute never departs from its Eternal Rules, but is always Uniform, and Agreeable to it Self: And as it hates our Sins, with an utter Ha-

tred, and cannot but assert its own Honour, by inflicting the Punishment that is due to them, so we can never think of it, but with a Sense of Guilt, and an Expectation of Vengeance.

The God of Justice will not indeed let Virtue pass Unrewarded; but even our best Actions are unworthy of a Reward; and cannot pretend even to claim a Pardon. *The Righteous Man falls Seven times a Day*, and therefore could derive nothing but Terror from considering the Justice of God, were he not also to consider his Boundless Goodness. And though the Innocence of *Moses* could have encourag'd him to stand with great Boldness, before a righteous God; tho' he had no reason to fear, that Vengeance would overtake himself, yet he must have been afraid for the Sake of others, and been dismay'd at the Thoughts of those miserable Creatures, that pursue their own Destruction, and constrain God's Justice to draw its Sword, and make their Plagues wonderful; for perfect Innocence must tremble at the Appearance *of the destroying Angel*, tho' it were assur'd, that *the Plague should not come nigh it Self*; it yet must grieve for *the Thousand that fall beside it, and the Ten thousand at its Right-Hand.*

There is yet another Reason, for which the Almighty might Promise to Shew only his Goodness; namely, That this should be as the Veil to cover his other Perfections, and they should be Cloath'd, and (I had almost

moſt ſaid) Adorn'd with Goodneſs. This is the only Manifeſtation of them that has ever been vouchſafed to us; and by this, their Majeſty condeſcends to us, and becomes even delightful to our Sight. His Goodneſs mov'd him to Create us, and to make us capable of Knowing him: And when he made himſelf known to us, all that he reveal'd of himſelf, was Goodneſs. His Providence gathers us under its Wings, that this gracious Attribute may be our Protection; and *his Banner over us is Love.* That Power which is able *to drive aſunder the Nations, and rend the Rocks in pieces,* is continually employ'd in the exerciſe of his Kindneſs, and is Almighty in doing Good. It brought the Earth and the Fulneſs thereof into Being, that it might ſhed abroad his Treaſures, and call'd a Multitude of Creatures into Life, that the Inſtances of his Bounty might ſtill increaſe and multiply.

His Wiſdom contrives the moſt effectual Means of promoting our Intereſt, and guides and turns the various Occurrences of the World, that they may miniſter to our Happineſs.

His Knowledge has the earlieſt Fore-ſight of our Wants, and even takes our Cares upon it ſelf, and prepares a ſuitable Supply for all our Neceſſities. His Univerſal Preſence is an Univerſal Benefit, and he almoſt ſeems to be Every where preſent, for this End, that his Goodneſs may be Every where preſent alſo. No Place or Time can Confine

ſine it; but it ſpreads through the whole Compaſs of Nature, and reaches infinitely beyond this tranſitory Scene. And as all the Meaſures of Time, and an unmeaſurable Eternity, are open at one View to God, ſo he at once beholds the glorious Variety of Bleſſings, which he beſtows for ever and ever; and at once enjoys an Eternity of Goodneſs.

And his Juſtice has ſuch a regard to this merciful Perfection, that it forbears to deſtroy the Sinner, and is willing to be ſatisfied with the Puniſhment of Sin.

The Incarnation of the Son of God afforded the moſt agreeable Sight of the Divine Perfections; For the Veil of Human Fleſh conceal'd their Terrible Glory; and Man could *ſee them and live*, when *he ſaw them through a Glaſs darkly*. But even then *all his Goodneſs paſs'd before us*, for it broke through the Veil, and could not be hid. His Power ſeem'd to be chang'd into the Weakneſs of an Infant, and diſdain'd not to be *wrapt in Swadling Cloathes, and laid in a Manger*. It ſubmitted to Hunger and Thirſt, to Cold and Nakedneſs; and forbore to exert it ſelf, while *the Soul of our Redeemer was exceeding Sorrowful, even unto Death*, and his Body *Sweat, as it were great Drops of Blood falling to the Ground*. It bore the Croſs with Patience and Reſignation, and *was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors* for the Sins of his People. But it was not altogether conceal'd, during his abode upon Earth: It appear'd but

but only in Acts of Mercy and Compassion, *not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them. Jesus of Nazareth was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Power; and he went about doing Good,* Giving sight to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, Ears to the Deaf, Health to the Sick, and Life to the Dead. And in his last Hour, tho' it did not manifest it self in his Rescue, yet it supported him with such Measures of Strength, as enabled him to bear the Weight of our Sins, and rendred his Sufferings effectual to our Salvation. *Act.* 10, 38

His Wisdom also was reveal'd but imperfectly, and open'd it self by degrees; while the Holy Jesus was a tender Infant, it complied with the Infirmities of a rational Soul, and waited till the Dawning of Human Reason; and he that was Perfectly Wise from all Eternity, did yet represent himself, as *increasing in Wisdom, as well as Stature:* He was distinguish'd indeed by his extraordinary Endowments, when *he was but Twelve Years Old*; but yet it is Marvellous, that he should lay so long conceal'd: *they that heard him disputing with the Doctors, were astonish'd at his Understanding and Answers,* but they would have been struck with greater Astonishment, had he not restrain'd his Wisdom, but suffer'd it to shine forth in its full Strength. *Luke* 2.

When he entred upon the publick Exercise of his Ministry, he Mercifully consider'd, that his Followers were only *Children in Understanding.* And tho' the Great Truths, which he brought down from Heaven, were worthy

worthy of God, and could be reveal'd only by him, yet he adapted them to the Capacities of Men, and regarded the Weakneſs of the Receivers, more than the Majeſty of the Giver.

He ſometimes ſpoke in Parables, becauſe they had not *Ears to hear them* more plainly deliver'd. And at other times he taught in the moſt familiar Manner, and ſtoop'd to the meaneſt Underſtandings, that the moſt ignorant of the People might be made *Wiſe unto Salvation.* And his Juſtice, that aweful Perfection, did as it were Suſpend it ſelf, and wait with Patience and Forbearance, hoping for their Amendment, till they had wearied Mercy it Self, and it could no longer refrain from Puniſhing.

The moſt remarkable Inſtance of Juſtice was ſhewn upon the Croſs; but even there 'twas Cloath'd with Goodneſs: It gave Satisfaction to it ſelf, by executing Vengeance upon the Well-beloved Son of God, and puniſhing our Sins in that Divine Perſon, that took them upon him. While Juſtice appear'd in the Puniſhment of one, Mercy rejoyc'd in the Salvation of the whole World.

And this Goodneſs *dwelt among us*, and vouchſafed us almoſt a Bodily Preſence, from the time that he left the Boſom of the Father, till he return'd to him, to reign in the Fulneſs of Glory. This Perfection was *that which his Diſciples heard, which they ſaw with*
1 *Joh.* 1. 1. *their Eyes, which they look'd upon, which they handled with their Hands.*

Having

Having enquir'd into the Reaſons, for which God might be ſuppos'd to Shew only his Goodneſs to *Moſes*, I proceed,

Secondly, To enquire in what Senſe it might *paſs before him.*

But I am diſcourag'd at the Attempt For, Who is Sufficient for it? For the Almighty did not only Promiſe to diſplay a Portion of it, but all his Goodneſs; and this is ſo extenſive an Object, that the Eye of Man is not large enough to behold it: And ſince our Faculties are bounded and confin'd, How can they form an Idea of an unlimited Perfection? Tho' we could ſee it clearly, as far as our Eye can reach, yet there would be a vaſt Compaſs, and even a World of Goodneſs, beyond the reach of our Eye; and when God manifeſts it all, we can know it but in part. In Heaven it Self, it cannot be entirely preſented to us at one View, but as our Capacities are open'd wider, it will give us a larger Sight of it Self; and when we have enjoy'd Ages of Happineſs, freſh Diſcoveries will ſtill remain to be made; the more we know of it, ſo much the more we ſhall find is ſtill to be known; and the utmoſt we ſhall learn from our higheſt Attainments will be, that our Proſpect will encreaſe to all Eternity.

We muſt therefore leſſen it, before we can take any Meaſure of it, and ſpeak only of ſome particular Inſtances of the Divine Goodneſs, if we ſpeak at all.

We

We may then ſuppoſe, that the Goodneſs *which paſs'd before Moſes*, conſiſted chiefly of his merciful Diſpenſations to his peculiar People, and the future Bleſſings that he intended to beſtow upon them. *Moſes* had juſt interceded for the Children of *Iſrael*, and *Stood in the Gap*, when the Divine Diſpleaſure was ready to break forth againſt them. And ſo tender was his Compaſſion towards them, that like the Son of God, he would have taken their Miſery upon himſelf, and
Ex. 32. 32. been *blotted out of the Book of God*, that their Sin might be forgiven. It is therefore probable, that God might diſplay the Riches of his Goodneſs towards the People whom *Moſes* Lov'd, with ſo ardent an Affection, and might unfold the gracious Counſels of his Providence.

He might ſhew him their wonderful Succeſs under *Joſhua*, firſt in Paſſing over the River *Jordan*, *when the Waters which came down from above ſtood, and roſe up upon an Heap, and thoſe that came down towards the*
Joſh. 3. 16. *Sea fail'd, and were cut off.* He might then preſent to him *the Walls of Jericho, that fell*
Joſh. 6. 20. *down at the Sound of the Trumpets*; and *the Slaughter of the Five Kings, that fought againſt Gibeon, while the Sun and Moon ſtood Still, till*
Joſh. 10. 13 *the People had aveng'd themſelves upon their Enemies.*

He might give him a Proſpect of their Victory over *Siſera*, *Captain of the Hoſt of Jabin, when the Stars in their Courſes fought*
Judges 5 *againſt Siſera*; *and he Bow'd, he Fell, he Lay down, Slain by the Hand of a Woman.* He

He might deſcribe their encreaſing Happineſs, *under Samuel and David, and Solomon,* and make him Joyful and Glad of Heart, for all the Goodneſs that he would do for theſe his Servants, and for *Iſrael* his People.

He might draw the Glory of his Temple, and the Beauty that adorn'd the Habitation of his Holineſs, *to which David and the chief of the Fathers, and the Princes of the Tribes, offer'd willingly with a perfect Heart,* and which *Solomon* fill'd with the various Riches of diſtant Nations. *Chron.* 29.

He might repreſent *Jeruſalem* Sitting as *Queen of the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces,* when the Mighty came from far, to behold and reverence her Greatneſs.

He might ſhew him his Arm ſtretch'd out to Save the City, when the Prayer of *Hezekiah* came before him; *and his Angel went forth to deſtroy a Hundred and Fourſcore and Five Thouſand of its Enemies.* *Iſa.* 37 36.

He might offer to his View the Good *Joſiah,* putting away the Corruptions of the Nation, and in the midſt of the Ungodly, aſſerting the Honour of God. He might ſet in Aray before him the glorious Company of the Prophets, which came from Time to Time intreating a ſinful Nation to accept the Overtures of Mercy.

And at length he might fill him with an Extaſy of Joy and Admiration, at the Expedient of ſending his only Son to take our Nature upon him, and *bringing forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jeſſe, to ſave the Gentiles,* and *Iſa.* 11. 1.

and his People Iſrael. He might open his Eyes to Behold the Hoſt of Angels that attended his Birth, that miniſtred to him after his Temptation, that proclaim'd his Reſurrection.

He might ſpread before him the Poverty and Meanneſs into which he was Born, and in which he Liv'd, and the Shame and Miſery in which he Died, together with all the Inſtances of his Mercy, from the Manger to the Croſs.

He might appear *Ariſing upon his Church*, and ſhedding his Glory upon it, and *Moſes* might ſee *the Gentiles coming to its Light, and Kings to the Brightneſs of its Riſing.*

Iſa. 60. 3. He might alſo diſplay the Conflicts of the Church militant, and deſcribe her paſſing through the Furnace, and coming forth *like the fine Gold.* And he might take down the Partition between this World and the other, ſhew him a Heavenly, as well as an Earthly *Canaan*, and tranſport him with the Sight of *Multitudes of every Nation and Language, coming to ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God.*

Mat. 8. 11. Thus might his Goodneſs paſs before *Moſes*; but ſtill we ſpeak but uncertainly, it is enough for us to make ſome ſlight Conjecture, and draw a faint Reſemblance of it. I proceed,

Thirdly, To enquire what Uſe we ſhould make of this gracious Diſpenſation.

And, Firſt, ſince God delights to manifeſt his Goodneſs, it ſhould encourage us to Serve and Pleaſe him. Goodneſs is the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt Obligation, and the moſt perſwaſive Inducement to the Diſcharge of our Duty: it has a mighty Influence over every Generous, Ingenuous Spirit, and carries them forth into Action with a lively Zeal; and it leaves the Diſobedient without Excuſe, and brings the heavy Charge of Perverſeneſs upon them. It muſt be an incurable Hardneſs of Heart, that cannot be melted with Goodneſs; and a fatal Stubbornneſs, that will not be drawn by *the Cords of Love.* It is an unſpeakable Pleaſure to follow the Captain of our Salvation, who has ſtrew'd Mercies in the Way, and made *the Path* of our Duty *a ſhining Light.* And tho' we paſs through the Wilderneſs, or the Sea, we need not be afraid, for he is our *Pillar* to defend, and our *Guide* to lead us. And if we look towards his Goodneſs, that paſſes before us, we ſhall not regard the Evils of this World, having ſo delightful an Object always in our Veiw.

It will *go before us* like *the Star, that went before the Wiſe Men, till it came and ſtood where the young Child, Jeſus, was*; and when we are arriv'd *at the Haven, where we would be,* it will enlarge our Souls, that they may receive the Fulneſs of Bliſs, and will give us the Eternal Enjoyment of it Self. Secondly, and Laſtly, Since the Goodneſs of God has come down to Viſit us, and made its Abode with us, we ſhould chiefly endeavour to imitate this Perfection; it has offer'd it ſelf, even to our ſtricteſt Survey, and ſtood be- *Mat.* 2.9.

fore us that we might take a Draught of it. It has not appear'd only for a short Time, like the transient Flashes of Lightning, but visited us continually, like *the Sun that rules the Day*; from Morning to Evening it has perform'd its usual Course, and been present with us in *the Watches of the Night*.

Let us not therefore value Our selves, for the Extent of our Power, the Improvements of our Knowledge, or Wisdom; Nor think too highly of our Attainments in Holiness; but whatsoever our Endowments are, Let them exercise and adorn themselves with Goodness. Let the Measure of our Power be fill'd with this amiable Virtue: and, Let us esteem it our Glory, to Protect the Weak, to Support the Injur'd, to Relieve the Poor, and to be like God in doing Good to Men.

Judas

Judas *Condemn'd by Himſelf, and Abandon'd by the Prieſts and Elders.*

A SERMON

Preach'd at

St. *Andrew's Holbourn.*

MATTHEW 27. 3, 4.

Then Judas which had Betray'd him, when he ſaw that he was Condemn'd, repented himſelf, and brought again the Thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts and Elders, ſaying, I have Sinned in that I have Betray'd the Innocent Blood. And they ſaid, What is that to us? ſee thou to that.

INgratitude and Treachery have always been branded with the deepeſt Marks of Infamy, and cover'd with univerſal Reproach. How much ſoever other Vices

have been dignify'd and diſtinguiſh'd by the undeſerv'd Honours of this uncertain World; and how plauſible ſoever they have been colour'd over, and palliated, by the Arts of Flattery; yet theſe accurſed Vices are of ſo groſs a Dye, and have ſo black a Tincture of Baſeneſs, that no Arts nor Labours can waſh out their Stain, no ſpecious Covering can conceal their Shame. Nor are they only condemn'd by the Cenſures of others, but even by the Judgment of the perfidious Villain himſelf, and the unavoidable Reflections of his own guilty Conſcience.

The moſt agreeable Overtures of unjuſt Gain cannot bribe him to acquit himſelf, or ſuſpend the Puniſhment which his flagrant Iniquities deſerve. But even in the very Inſtant of his Enjoyment, or rather before he has number'd the Pieces of Silver, his Baſeneſs riſes in Judgment againſt him, and ſets all its aggravating Circumſtances in Aray before his Face.

And this is fully confirm'd by the immediate Remorſe, that follow'd the ungrateful Treachery of *Judas*. This wretched Villain was taken into the ſelect Number of our Saviour's Diſciples, and admitted into the cloſeſt Relation to the innocent Jeſus, who had no Deceit in his Lips, *and in whoſe*
1 *Pet* 2.22 *Mouth there was found no Guile.* Being made Partaker of his intimate Converſation, he was a conſtant Witneſs of the untainted Purity and Holineſs of his Life, and ſo far from diſcerning any Spot or Blemiſh in his Character,

racter, that tho' he was baſe enough to betray him, yet he could not frame any Accuſation againſt him, nor was he only honour'd with the Character of a Diſciple, but for the Trial of his Integrity, he was intruſted with the Bag, in which his Maſter's Money was carried for his daily Alms. This Truſt being conferr'd upon him, afforded a pleaſing Opportunity for his ſordid mercenary Temper to gratify it ſelf. This made him greedily deſire to enlarge his Stores, and condemn all Expences, as needleſs and extravagant, that did not paſs thro' his Hands. And when the devout *Mary anointed the Feet of Jeſus with very coſtly Ointment of Spikenard, and fill'd the Houſe with the Odour of the Ointment*; his penurious Soul urg'd him to complain of her pious Liberality; *why was not this Ointment ſold for three hundred Pence, and given to the Poor?* This he ſaid, not that he car'd for the Poor, but becauſe *he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein.* So fond was he of filthy Lucre, that he made a ſacrilegious Abuſe even of Charity it ſelf; and intended to rob the Fatherleſs and the Widow, under a Pretence of providing for them! John 12.

The Devil knowing his ſecret Corruption, and *the Sin which did ſo eaſily beſet him*, preſented a ſuitable Temptation to his treacherous Affections, and took poſſeſſion of his Heart, that was prepar'd to receive him.

His inſatiable Avarice ſtretch'd out its Hand, and eagerly reach'd after the Treaſures of Wickedneſs; and perſwaded him to

ſet his Maſter, and his Friend to Sale. *He*
Matth. 26. 14, 15, 27. *went unto the chief Prieſts, and ſaid unto them, what will ye give me, and I will deliver him*
9. *unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty Pieces of Silver. Lo! This was the Price of him that was valued, whom they of the Children of Iſrael did value!*

From that Time he ſought how he might con-
Mark 14. 11. *veniently betray him*, and behold an Opportunity offer'd it ſelf: For *Jeſus went forth with his Diſciples over the Brook Cedron, where was*
John 18. 1, 2. *a Garden, into the which he enter'd, and his Diſciples. And Judas which betray'd him, knew the Place, for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his Diſciples.* He had often retir'd thither for Privacy and Devotion, and had taken *Judas* with him as a choſen Friend, and one of the Partners of his Soul. And it might juſtly have been ſuppos'd, that the very Place ſhould have put him in Mind of his former Friendſhip, and have ſtifled his intended Treachery in the Womb of his Breaſt. But the *Bribe* had *blinded his Eyes*, and compell'd him to go on with a reſolute Stupidity, to the Execution of his Purpoſe. And *having receiv'd a Band of Men and Officers from the*
John 18. 3. *chief Prieſts and Phariſees, he came with Lanterns, and Torches, and Weapons.* But what need was there of theſe Military Preparations, this ſtrong Retinue of Soldiers? *Why*
Mark 14. 48. *came they out, as againſt a Thief, with Swords and Staves?* Jeſus is ready to go *like a Lamb to the Slaughter*; neither does he wait till they come with Violence to ſeize him; but he

he goes to meet them, ſaying, *Whom ſeek ye? They anſwer him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am he.* This undaunted Anſwer was of greater Force than all the Band of Men, and all their Swords and Staves. The Majeſty of God ſtrook them with Confuſion, even in this their *Hour of Darkneſs*, and *the Beauty of Holineſs* fill'd them with Dread and Aſtoniſhment; and *as ſoon as he had ſaid unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the Ground.* John 18. 4, 5. John 18. 6.

When they had recover'd their Strength, *Judas*, that conducted them thither, *went forward, and drew near to Jeſus, to kiſs him. But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* This juſt and ſevere Rebuke was enough to have enter'd into the Soul of any one, but a mercenary Wretch that had ſold himſelf to Perdition. Every Word cut like a two edged Sword, and had Weight enough to break the moſt obſtinate Temper, or ſink the Traitor into the nethermoſt Hell. Luke 22. 47, 48.

When our Saviour call'd him by the Name of *Judas*, it ſhew'd that he was familiarly acquainted with him, and had been accuſtom'd to give him that Appellation: and if there had been any Remembrance of their paſt Converſation, any Regard to their intimate Acquaintance, any Remains of Humanity in *Judas*, he muſt have recollected himſelf, when his familiar Friend ſpoke to him by Name.

When Jesus added that Infamous Word, *Betrayest*, it was sufficient to stamp the Idea of Treachery upon his Mind, and affright him with the surprizing Image of his Abominable Baseness.

When he said farther, *Judas, Betrayest thou?* This brought the startling Question home to him, and forc'd him to behold the Aggravations of his Treachery. *Judas*, Dost thou Betray me, who so lately disownedst the Charge? Dost thou *lift up thy Heel against me*, who wert us'd *to sit at my Table, and eat of my Bread*, and didst partake even of my last Supper? Dost *thou, even thou, my Companion, and my familiar Friend*, cancel all the Obligations of Nature and Religion, by delivering me into the Hands of mine Enemies? Didst thou harbour these vile Intentions in thy Heart, when *we took sweet Counsel together, and walk'd in the House of God as Friends?*

Ps. 41. 9
55. 13, 14.

Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of Man? This adds a yet stronger Force, and sets a yet sharper Edge upon the Rebuke. *The Son of Man* was the distinguishing Title which our Saviour bore in regard to his human Nature, as he was call'd *the Son of God* according to his Divine Essence. And by this distinguishing Title, he was known to *Judas*, who had attended upon him in the Work of his Ministry, and seen him perform the Wonders of God, whilst he dwelt in our Flesh: and as Treachery is a foul and scandalous Sin in any Person, and more especially in a Disciple of Christ; so it was most exceedingly sinful

ſinful to betray *the Son of Man*, who had alſo manifeſted himſelf to be *the Son of God:* and it ſhew'd the moſt deſperate Obſtinacy, ſince our Saviour had given him the plaineſt Admonition of his Danger, *Wo to that Man, by whom the Son of Man is Betray'd; good were it for that Man, if he had not been born.* Matth. 26. 24.

But our Saviour's Words fall with a yet heavier Weight, and gall the Traitor in a yet more tender Part. *Judas, Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* Had not *Judas* been once a Friend, he could not have conducted the Band of Men into the Place of our Saviour's Retirements, neither could he have ſo ſurely executed his villainous Deſigns without the Tokens of Friendſhip. *The Wounds of an open Enemy*, are leſs dangerous than the Embraces of a pretended Friend; and *the Swords and Staves* of the Soldiers are not ſo pernicious as *the Kiſs* of the Falſe Apoſtle. *His Lips drop as an Honey-comb, and his Mouth is ſmoother than Oil; with fairneſs of Speech he betrays his Lord, and with flattering Lips he takes him Captive.* Prov. 5. 3.

Even this ſharp Rebuke is ſet at nought by the unrelenting Villain, and his Heart is as yet too hard to be wrought upon: With an impudent Face he addreſſes himſelf to the innocent Jeſus, and abuſes the honourable Relation that he lately bore, and ſays, *Hail Maſter, and kiſſes him.* Leſt the Attempt ſhould fail, he bids the Soldiers obſerve the appointed Token, and Second his Treachery with immediate Violence, *Whomſoever I ſhall Kiſs*

Mark 14. 44. *Kiss* (says he) *that same is he, hold him fast.*

We have now trac'd the perfidious Apostate from the first Instance of his Baseness, to the Consummation of it, in Betraying his Lord. We have seen him dragg'd by his covetous Spirit, thro' the filthy Paths of Dishonesty, those slippery Paths that lead to Prov. 5. 5. Destruction, and *take hold of Hell.* And we may stand a while to behold him reaping the Fruits of Wickedness, and receiving the Wages of Iniquity.

We need not at this Time follow our Saviour to *the Palace of the high Priest,* or to *the Judgment Hall*; it is sufficient to observe, that after he was betray'd into the Hands of unreasonable and cruel Men, he was condemn'd to die: and tho' this was easy to be foreseen, as the Consequence of *Judas*'s perfidious Action; and he could hardly think at all, without perceiving the Intent of the High Priests in covenanting with him, yet he was so fatally blinded by his prevailing Corruption, that he seems not to have foreseen, at least not to have consider'd this obvious Consequence, this highly-probable Event; or however he came not to himself, till it was actually brought to pass. *Then Judas which had betray'd him, when he saw that he was condemn'd, repented himself, and brought again the thirty Pieces of Silver.* Then he too late acknowledg'd that certain Truth, which he could not be ignorant of, even in the Midst of his Treachery; *I have sinn'd, in that I have betray'd the Innocent Blood.* And then

then he found, but he found too late, that he was deſpis'd even by the Prieſts and Elders, that made him ſubſervient to their Purpoſe; and was rejected with that diſdainful Anſwer, *What is that to us? See thou to that!*

O, accurſed Wretch! where is the Reward of thy Baſeneſs? what do *thy thirty Pieces of Silver* avail? Thou wouldſt gladly give them back again, but thy Reſtitution is vain. Thou didſt value thy Saviour at too low a Rate: The Price for which thou wert not aſham'd to ſell him, is too ſmall a Price to procure his Ranſom. *Though Wickedneſs were ſweet in thy Mouth; though thou hiddeſt it under thy Tongue; yet in thy Bowels it is turn'd; it is the Gall of Aſps within thee:* The Riches that thou greedily *ſwallowedſt down*, thou art forc'd to *vomit up again*; neither canſt thou have the leaſt Enjoyment of what thou deſiredſt: in vain doſt thou caſt it up, as the *Troubled Sea caſts up Mire and Dirt:* In vain doſt thou endeavour to ſtill that troubled Sea that riſes in thy Breaſt. The Patrons and Abettors of thy Wickedneſs will not afford thee a Moments Eaſe, or bear the leaſt Part of thy Burthen: If thou haſt *ſinn'd* (as moſt aſſuredly thou haſt) *in Betraying Innocent Blood*, yet they have perform'd their Part of the Covenant, and paid the Wages for thy infamous Work: *Verily thou haſt thy Reward.* Their malicious Purpoſe is accompliſh'd, and they have no more Occaſion for the Inſtrument by which it was wrought. Thou haſt nothing now remaining, but to ſink under the Weight of thy

Job 20.

thy Guilt, unpitied, unlamented. The Guilt of Betraying thy Lord was entirely thine, for thou wert ſo baſe, as to expoſe thy ſelf to Sale, and to ſeek after, and court the Temptation: It was thy own voluntary Act, to go to the High Prieſts and Elders, and offer thy perfidious Help to accompliſh their wicked Deſigns, and gratify their inveterate Malice: And even the Guilt of ſhedding this innocent Blood is alſo thine, as well as theirs, becauſe thou gaveſt them the Opportunity of doing it; And though thou now proteſteſt againſt it, yet thou art acceſſary to it, as the Head-ſpring from whence it flows: If thy Heart reproaches thee, becauſe thou haſt *Betray'd the Innocent Blood*, it might alſo have reproach'd thee when thou wert going to *Betray it.* For thou wert a daily Witneſs of thy Maſter's Innocence, and thy late Confeſſion is not the Effect of thy preſent Reflections, but of thy more early Conviction; and thy Knowledge of Jeſus, was the ſame when thou didſt firſt receive, as it is now, when thou deſireſt to return, *the Thirty Pieces of Silver.* Thy corrupt Heart, that prompted thee to commit this unnatural Wickedneſs, now accuſes thee for it. Thy ſeeming Friends, that covenanted with thee, deſert and abandon thee in thy Diſtreſs: Whatſoever thou ſuffereſt they will take *no Part, nor Lot in this Matter: What is it to them? See thou to that.* They are almoſt afraid to touch the Money which thy Villany has defiled: They dare *not put it in the Treaſury*, leſt it ſhould be a Canker

Canker to conſume their Stores, *an accurſed Thing to trouble them.* The only uſe they can venture to apply it to, is to purchaſe *a Field for the Burial of Strangers*, and the Land is polluted with the Price that is paid for it, and branded for ever with that odious Name, *The Field of Blood.* *Matth.* 27. 6, 7, 8.

Having conſider'd the Caſe of *Judas*, and the Guilt and Miſery that oppreſs'd his wounded Spirit, and the Contempt that was pour'd upon him, to aggravate and imbitter his Miſery, and render him moſt exceedingly wretched, I ſhall make ſeveral Obſervations upon the whole.

And *Firſt*, I ſhall obſerve, That a corrupt, ſordid Temper, is liable to be drawn into the worſt of Villany.

Secondly, That we ſhould ſtrictly avoid baſe, unjuſt, and treacherous Actions, leſt we ſhould be charg'd with their pernicious Conſequences.

Thirdly, That Men frequently bewail thoſe pernicious Conſequences, which they at firſt occaſion, and would afterwards, but too late, prevent.

Fourthly, That corrupt Practices are follow'd by ſevere Remorſe, and the Enjoyment of them is interrupted by the Reflections of Conſcience.

And *Laſtly*, That they expoſe us to the Contempt and Scorn even of the moſt wicked Men, who make uſe of the Treachery, but Hate and Deſpiſe the Traitor.

And

And *Firſt*, I ſhall obſerve, That a corrupt, ſordid Temper, is liable to be drawn into the Worſt of Villany.

This Obſervation has been frequently confirm'd in every Age; but were there no other Inſtance, but the Villany of *Judas*, That alone would ſufficiently confirm it. For it is enough, that the fouleſt Actions of the worſt of Men, and the moſt unnatural Return that ever was made to the beſt of Friends, entirely proceeded from Covetouſneſs. The ſacred Hiſtory has charg'd no other Vice upon him; no other Blot cleaves to him; but the malignant Influence of this accurſed Sin tainted all the Faculties of his Soul, and turn'd his Heart into a Maſs of Corruption. Had not this perverted him, he might never have prov'd unfaithful to the Truſt that was repos'd in him, nor have ſet himſelf and his Lord to Sale for *Thirty Pieces of Silver*.

We generally find thoſe diſgraceful Words, Sordid and Mercenary, join'd together; and they generally concurr in making up the ſame odious Character; for whoſoever is Sordid, has no Pretenſions to the Liberty of human Nature, for he is ſold into Slavery, and is the Property of every one that will pay him his Wages, and is diſpos'd of at Pleaſure, by his arbitrary Maſters. The Devil is acquainted with the Force of every Temptation, and he knows, that the inordinate Love of Riches will compel his Proſelytes to commit all manner of Iniquity *with Greedineſs*. Therefore he never fails to apply this Temptation

tation to thoſe mercenary Wretches that are diſpos'd to receive it. By this he enſures his Prey, and not only, eaſily obtains, but certainly keeps the Dominion over them. For this bows them down to the Earth, or rather bends them down to Hell, and fixes their Affections there. Henceforth they are enroll'd in his Party, and are ready to do his Work, whenſoever their Avarice bids them do it.

It was an abſurd Propoſal which the Devil made to our Saviour: *All theſe Things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* Mat. 4. 9. But though the Sin and the Temptation to it, were rejected with Abhorrence by our Saviour, yet many there are that diſcern not the Horror and Uglineſs of the Sin, whilſt they gaze on the glittering Appearance of the Temptation; and if Satan will give them their Hearts deſire, they will ſacrifice the Dignity of their Nature to their Luſt, and *fall down and worſhip him.* When Covetouſneſs has taken Poſſeſſion of the Heart, it ſhuts out every Thing that is *Honeſt*, or *Juſt*, or *Praiſe-worthy*, and fixing the Thoughts upon one Point, it makes them regardleſs of every Thing elſe. Hence they forget the Diſtinctions of Good and Evil, and are incapable of receiving Impreſſions from any other Object but their darling Idol. The Senſe of Honour or Charity, or Friendſhip, no longer ſtirs within them. Friendſhip is of too generous a Nature to find Entertainment in a ſordid Mind. For that dilates

lates and expands it ſelf, and labours to communicate its Happineſs, and ſpread it abroad: for it cannot confine it to it ſelf, or enjoy it alone; but places the very Eſſence, and Life, and Spirit of Happineſs, in the making others Partakers with it. But a ſordid Temper incloſes it ſelf within the Abundance which it heaps together; and tho' its Deſires be large as Hell, and it opens wide to receive, yet ſtill it is contracted into ſo narrow a Compaſs, that it cannot admit any Partner into its Boſom, or regard any thing but its own corrupt Affections.

The Growth of Covetouſneſs has often blaſted the Happineſs of Friendſhip, and ſubverted the Foundations upon which it was built. *What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?* Theſe were the Words of the infamous *Judas*; and one might juſtly think his Example were too Bad for Imitation. But alas! theſe Words have been often repeated, and often produc'd the like pernicious Effect. When evil Men have ſought in vain to accompliſh the Ruin of an innocent Perſon, they at length have brought it to paſs by Bribing his Friend. No one but he could know the ſecret Paſſages to his Heart, and the Way to attack him with the ſureſt Succeſs: therefore he has been corrupted, and made ſubſervient to their malicious Purpoſes, and the Inſtruments of Wickedneſs have been conducted to his inmoſt Retirements, becauſe *Judas, who Betray'd him, knew the Place.*

As

As the ſecret Canker of Corruption has deſtroy'd real Friendſhip, ſo this abominable Vice has tempted Men to put on the Face of Friendſhip, and make a perfidious Uſe of that ſacred Alliance, to obtain its End, and gratify its greedy Deſires. Hence all thoſe pretended Civilities and ſeeming Courteſies ariſe, that ſerve only to carry on a preſent Deſign, and raiſe a temporary Intereſt. From this Root all that Deceit and Diſſimulation ſprings, which *ſpeaks* nothing but *ſmooth Things*, and wears the plauſible Appearance of Kindneſs and Amity, whilſt it intends to devour, and ſpoil the Perſon whom it ſeems to careſs.

But I need not ſpeak of the private Miſchiefs that flow from the inſatiable Deſire of Riches, when the Church and Kingdom bewail its fatal Effects. How many were there in the great Rebellion, who bore no Hatred to the King, nor Prejudice to the Church, who yet were conſtrain'd by their mercenary Temper, to be ſubſervient to the vileſt of Men, and weary themſelves in their accurſed Service! How many were there that revell'd in the Ruins of their Country, and were drunken in Blood, barely for the Sake of Plunder, and to enrich themſelves by the Miſeries of their Fellow-Chriſtians! How many that *ſaw the Anguiſh of their Brethren and would not hear*, and denied them even the ſmall Remains of a wretched Life, becauſe they were reſolv'd to tear their wrack'd Veſſel in Pieces, and ſeize all their Poſſeſſions.

But alas! we may come down to later Inſtances. Is not our Church daily Betray'd, even by thoſe that Kneel at the Altar? Is not the Holy Altar it ſelf made a Step, by which they riſe to the higheſt Degrees of Wickedneſs? Do not thoſe that pretend to charge Idolatry upon our Communion, occaſionally join in that very Communion, that they may commit Sacrilege? Is not the Word of God perverted, and Truth deliver'd up as a Sacrifice to worldly Intereſt? Is not the ſacred Function vilified, even by them that were ſworn to execute it faithfully? Is not the Divinity of the Son of God denied by them who were appointed *to feed the Church, which he purchas'd with his Blood?* And are not all theſe Evils deriv'd from ſordid Baſeneſs?

And it has been no leſs Injurious to our Civil, than to our Religious Intereſts: It is this that has made almoſt a general Deſolation thro' this, once happy Kingdom, and wounded it ſo deep in every Part, that Children yet unborn will feel its piercing Miſeries; and our Bleeding Country may complain in the Words of the Prophet, *Why is my Pain perpetual, and my Wound incurable, which refuſeth to be heal'd? Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Phyſician there? Why then is not the Health of the Daughter of my People recover'd?*

Jer. 15. 18

Jer. 8. 22.

Every Rank and Order of Men, have been tainted with *the accurſed Thing*, and *join'd hand in hand to trouble our Iſrael.* Even thoſe

thoſe whom God had enrich'd with the Abundance of all Things, whoſe Cup overflow'd with Plenty, have yet conſpir'd to oppreſs *the Fatherleſs and the Widow.* Their Thirſt could not be allay'd, unleſs they fill'd a larger Cup with the Tears of Orphans, and trod the Needy *as in a Wine-preſs*, to ſqueeze and extort from them, even that little for which their weeping *Eyes had waited long.* Brutiſh and unrelenting Cruelty! to feed upon the Diſtreſſed, and build ſtately Palaces upon the Ruins of Widows Houſes. *Go to* the ſavage Beaſts, ye barbarous Oppreſſors; let the *Sea-Monſters* teach you Humanity. May the fatal Conſequences of your boundleſs Avarice, be a laſting Admonition, and a perpetual Teſtimony againſt your Sins; may they be written as *with a Pen of Iron, and with the Point of a Diamond*, and be engraven on *the Tables of our Hearts*, that it may be for ever avoided with the greateſt Abhorrence. For, as I ſhall

Secondly obſerve, We ſhould ſtrictly avoid baſe, unjuſt and treacherous Actions, leſt we ſhould be charg'd with their pernicious Conſequences.

Corrupt Men are ſo intent upon their preſent Advantage, and fix their Eyes ſo ſtedfaſtly upon it, that they do not conſider the Nature of the Action, which it inclines them to commit; much leſs do they look forward to the Conſequences of their Baſeneſs, or think of the Multitude of Evils that may flow from it: If their covetous Deſires

would give them leave to ſtand a while and conſider, corrupt as they are, they would tremble at the Thoughts of their Wickedneſs, and hardly venture to plunge themſelves into ſo *great a Deep* of Iniquity. But how regardleſs ſoever they are of future Miſchiefs, they will certainly be charg'd upon them, if they are acceſſary to them; and if they betray their Neighbour, their Friend, their Country, or their Church, and deliver them into the Hands of Men more vile than themſelves, they muſt expect to anſwer for the unhappy Effects of their Treachery, though thoſe Effects are wrought more immediately by the Hands of other Men.

If *Joſeph's* Brethren are deaf to the Cries of Humanity, and ſo forgetful of the Dictates of Nature, as to ſell their innocent Brother for a Slave; the *Iſhmaelites* that buy him, may afterwards diſpoſe of him as they pleaſe; and if they ſell him again into *Egypt*, and he ſuffer hard Bondage there, his cruel and revengeful Brethren are the principal Cauſes of his Sufferings; and howſoever the Providence of God may over-rule them, yet they muſt acknowledge the Charge that lies againſt them, and ſay with one Voice, *We are verily Guilty.*

Gen. 42. 21.

If *Judas* ſeizes his Maſter, while he pretends to embrace him, and delivers him up to his Enemies, while he ſays, *Hail Maſter, and Kiſſes him*; though he does not join with *the falſe Witneſſes* that accuſe him, nor the Prieſts and Elders that condemn him, yet he

he is guilty of his Death, becauſe he gives him into their Power, and by betraying him, enables them to arraign and condemn him.

If a Magiſtrate permits Iniquity to abound, when he has ſufficient Authority to prevent its Progreſs and Encreaſe; if he *bears the Sword in vain*, when he ſhould uſe it *for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers*, the Weight of Guilt will lie heavily upon him; and he will be accountable, at leaſt for not diſcouraging Wickedneſs, or rather, I fear, for giving Encouragement to it: And *Eli's Houſe ſhall be judg'd for ever, for the Iniquity which he knoweth, becauſe his Sons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrain'd them not.* 1 *Sam.* 3. 13.

How well ſoever we eſteem the Conſtitution of our Country, and the Offices of our Church; and how much ſoever we value our ſelves, for harbouring no Thought againſt them, but always wiſhing well to the Intereſts of both; yet if for the Sake of any Tempting Overture of worldly Advantage, we chooſe the Enemies of our Church and Country to repreſent us; and by that Choice empower them to act in our Name, their Act and Deed will be accounted ours alſo: and if they violate the Civil and Religious Intereſts of the Kingdom, we muſt lay the Blame upon our ſelves, for we are the Authors, tho' they are the Inſtruments of Miſchief; and they muſt be ſuppos'd to do Evil with our Conſent, ſince they could not have done it without it.

If the Paſtors of the Church yield up the divine Authority which Chriſt has given them,

and lay down the Fences which were planted to guard it from Violence, they are obnoxious to the Wrath of God, not only for the Breach of their Truſt, but for the Multitude of Hereſies that are encourag'd to ariſe, and the Deluge of Blaſphemy and Profaneneſs that flows from a general Licentiouſneſs.

Theſe deplorable Conſequences ſhould be deeply conſider'd, while the *Cloud is yet no bigger than a Man's Hand*, that we may not be fill'd with vain and ineffectual Sorrow, when the Evils are grown too ſtrong to be controll'd. For,

Thirdly, Men frequently bewail thoſe pernicious Conſequences, which they at firſt occaſion, and would afterwards, but too late, prevent.

It is an Obſervation of *Solomon*, that *the Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water.* The Meaning of which Obſervation is this, that he that beginneth Strife, or kindleth Contention, gives Riſe to an Evil that cannot be reſtrain'd; the Banks being once broken down, it ſpreads *like Water that runneth apace*, and he cannot tell how far it will ſpread, or what will be the End thereof; for he alone can ſtop its Progreſs that ſets bounds to the Sea, and ſays, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther.

Pro. 17. 14

And the ſame Obſervation is true of all other Wickedneſs: There is a Gradation in Sin, and a Chain and Connection between the different Kinds of Evil: One Vice is the Parent of another, and they continually *in-*

creaſe

creaſe and multiply: And they that give birth to them, cannot break the Chain, or prevent their Growth.

The Way to Hell is down a ſteep Precipice, and the Path is ſo ſlippery, that it is very difficult to continue in one Stay, or to recall our Steps when they are moving towards Deſtruction: And therefore Men are unhappily involv'd in greater Degrees, after they are once engag'd in one Degree of Wickedneſs, and often contribute towards filling up thoſe Meaſures of Iniquity, which at firſt they could not have thought of without Abhorrence: And it grieves them to reflect upon thoſe Evils that proceed from their former Actions, which they might have prevented, if they had ſooner conſider'd the Event of Things.

Corruption is *like Witch-craft*, it trains Men on inſenſibly from one Sin to another: and having once beguil'd them of their Integrity, it leads them from Step to Step in the Paths of Diſhoneſty, and perſwades them to digeſt groſſer Sins, and a greater Maſs of Wickedneſs.

As evilMen degenerate, even from themſelves, and fall from bad to worſe, till they become vile, even beyond their Intentions; ſo the worſt of Men could never finiſh their wicked Deſigns, without the Concurrence of thoſe that are better than themſelves; and they that aid and abett them, ſeldom perceive the final Iſſue of their Actions, or obſerve whither the Courſe of their Pro-

ceedings tends, till they have empower'd them to bring to paſs, what they themſelves lament and abhor.

Thus in that execrable Rebellion, which brought the Guilt of innocent Blood upon this Land, which cries aloud for Vengeance even at this Day; many of the Perſons that contriv'd and carried on the War, and purſued their King from Place to Place, till they had entirely defeated him, were yet deeply afflicted for that amazing Stroke which murder'd the Lord's anointed; and in vain wiſh'd for his Deliverance, when they had given him into the Hands of unrelenting Enemies, and depriv'd themſelves of the Power to deliver Him: And they diſtinguiſh'd in vain between the Guilt of fighting againſt him, and the Guilt of taking away his Life; for they that brought him to Priſon, did in Effect bring him to the Scaffold, ſince there is but a little Diſtance between the Priſons and the Graves of Princes; and the former is but a Paſſage to the latter.

The Repentance of ſuch Men, like the the Repentance of *Judas*, was too late; equally fruitleſs in this World: But *Charity, that hopeth all Things*, inclines me to hope, that it might through the infinite Mercies of God, be more effectual in the other.

The preſent Advantage that is deriv'd from any baſe Compliance, is but a mean and unequal Price for the Loſs of our Innocence: And if it is not worthy of Acceptance, even at the firſt, how unworthy of it muſt it appear,

pear, when we would fain give it back again, to cancel our Guilt? and it will yield us no Recompence or Conſolation for the Evils that ariſe from our Corruption.

The Thirty Pieces of Silver were as nothing in Compariſon of the Lord of Life, when *Judas covenanted* for them to Betray his Maſter; and they were infinitely leſs than nothing, even in the Sight of *Judas*, when *he caſt them down in the Temple* with Sorrow and Indignation.

The only ſure and ſtable Defence againſt approaching Calamities, is a conſtant and ſtedfaſt Integrity, overſhadow'd with the Wings of divine Providence: Whenſoever we depart from it, we lay our ſelves open to a great deal of Sin and Miſery, which we cannot avoid, and ſhall bewail too late. But if we *hold faſt our Integrity, and refuſe to let it go*, we ſhall have this to comfort us, in the Midſt of all the Calamities that are gathering together on every Side, that tho' we could not prevent, yet we were not acceſſary to them. But if the Satisfaction that Integrity gives us, does not effectually engage us to cleave to it, we may obſerve

Fourthly, That corrupt Practices are follow'd by ſevere Remorſe, and the Enjoyment of them is interrupted by the Reflections of Conſcience.

A baſe and diſhoneſt Action is ſo diſagreeable to the Minds of Men, that it is not in their Power to eſteem or approve it. Human Nature looks upon it with Diſdain and Abhorrence,

horrence, and cannot prevail upon it ſelf to entertain a different Opinion, or alter its juſt Conceptions. They are wrought into our Frame, and interwoven with the Principles of our Being; and we cannot wear out the Stamp that is imprinted upon us. A foul and perfidious Proceeding is cover'd with *the very Blackneſs of Darkneſs*; and every *Eye that ſees it*, muſt *give Witneſs* againſt it: And tho' a *Bribe may blind our Eyes*, and ſuſpend our Judgment, yet we cannot long divert our Thoughts from beholding Baſeneſs, as it really is, neither can we long withſtand our Conviction. Our Affections may for a Time uſurp the Throne of Reaſon; but the ſupreme Faculty will re-aſſume and vindicate its injur'd Right; for no unnatural State can be laſting; and as ſoon as Reaſon exerts its Power, it will ſhew the Villain to himſelf, and conſtrain him to loath his ugly Character.

Innocence can ſtand the Teſt of the ſevereſt Trial, and baffle the pretended Evidence that is ſuborn'd againſt it. The Malice of the Prieſts and Elders *ſeeks for falſe Witneſſes* againſt the Holy Jeſus, *but can find none*; and even they that are urg'd to accuſe
Mark 14. him, cannot *agree in their Teſtimony*. But the Treacherous *Judas* needs no Accuſer but himſelf, no other Judge but his guilty Conſcience. He is convicted by his own Accuſation, and oppreſs'd with the Weight of his own impartial Sentence. *The Thirty Pieces of Silver* cannot allay the Trouble that breaks in upon him; inſtead of ſupporting him in the

the needful Time, they *pierce him through with many Sorrows*, and imbitter his Miſery, becauſe they bear *the Image and Superſcription* of his Sin. Whither can he fly for Refuge? Not to his Maſter, for he cannot plead for Mercy from him whom he has ungratefully Betray'd; not to himſelf, for he is not able to ſtand before that ſharp Accuſer, and that dreadful Judge; nor to the Prieſts and Elders that brib'd him to Betray, for they have no Compaſſion for him; his Complaints cannot move them to relent; all that he can obtain from them, is that ſcornful Anſwer, *What is that to us? See thou to That.* Which brings me to obſerve,

Fifthly and *Laſtly*, That corrupt Practices expoſe us to the Contempt and Scorn, even of the moſt wicked Men, who make uſe of the Treachery, but hate and deſpiſe the Traitor.

The great Enemy of Mankind makes it his conſtant Endeavour to lead them into Miſchief; and when he has deceiv'd them into Miſery, he triumphs over them, and mocks at their Calamity; and his buſy Agents in this World, delight in drawing others into the ſame Exceſs of Wickedneſs, and uſing them as the Inſtruments of their baſe Deſigns; and when they have bent them down to a ſordid Compliance, they treat them with the utmoſt Contempt, and trample upon them in that wretched Condition to which they are fallen. Diſgrace and Scorn are ſo juſtly due to Sin, that it is hardly poſſible for wicked

wicked Men to think of themſelves, without being aſham'd of their loathſom State; it ſtares in their Face, and they endeavour to ſhun and avoid the diſagreeable View of themſelves. But how favourable ſoever they may be to their own Caſe, how much ſoever they are inclin'd to indulge their own Wickedneſs, yet they naturally deſpiſe their corrupt Accomplices, while they make them Partakers of their Guilt, and employ them as Slaves in the Execution of their Purpoſes.

They may perhaps fawn upon them, while they are labouring to corrupt them; and may ſooth and careſs them, till they are thoroughly engag'd; but when they have ſerv'd them as far as their vile Occaſions require, then they deſert them as uſeleſs, contemptible Creatures, and leave them to ſuffer the worſt Effects of their Sins, without attempting to aſſwage their Miſery, by ſhewing a compaſſionate Senſe of it.

When Men engage in wicked Meaſures, they have a bad Cauſe, which requires as bad Means to promote it; and therefore they are compel'd to uſe thoſe baſe, perfidious Inſtruments, which they can hardly make uſe of without bluſhing; and when they have wrought their evil Work, they throw them away with a juſt Diſdain.

For a Treacherous Perſon is a Common Enemy, tho' he may be employ'd as an Occaſional Friend: the ſame corrupt Principle that tempts him to Betray one, will alſo diſpoſe him to Betray another; and he will be falſe

falſe on every Side, if he is offer'd a greater Price than he has already receiv'd. Therefore he is deſpis'd by every one, becauſe he is true to no one; but does whatever ſervile Work is impos'd upon him, by his rigid *Task-Maſters*, that have bought him for a Slave to their Sin.

What a wretched Figure does *Judas* make, when he endeavours to move the Compaſſion of the Prieſts and Elders, and with a broken dejected Spirit, ſuppliantly begs them to receive the Wages of his Iniquity! With what Scorn and Contempt do they treat the Abandon'd Wretch, and leave him to periſh under the intolerable Weight of his Guilt!

So little Friendſhip is there to be found amongſt Men! So little Pity is ſhewn, even by thoſe from whom we moſt expect it, if we forfeit the Peace of our Conſcience, and the Favour of God!

Let us therefore *hold faſt our Integrity*, as a Support that will never fail; and, Let no corrupt Motive prevail with us to violate our Conſcience, and injure our Immortal Intereſt.

Let us carefully weigh the future Conſequences, as well as the preſent Advantages of our Actions; and conſider with our ſelves, whether our immediate Profit will be a ſufficient Recompence for our diſquieting Reflections!

When it appears before us, in the moſt inticing Manner, and with all the Strength of a Temptation, Let us behold it in another View, and ſee how diſagreeable it will be,

when

when our reſtleſs Conſcience would give the World in Exchange for our Soul, and all the Gain we have unjuſtly gotten, will add to the Weight of our Miſery.

Let us poſſeſs our Minds with the higheſt Value for the amiable Virtue of Sincerity; and, Let not *an Houſe full of Silver and Gold* induce us to Betray our Friend, our Neighbour, or even our Enemy.

Let us look upon Treachery with the Scorn that it deſerves; or rather, Let us turn away our Eyes from it with Abhorrence.

And, Let us conſtantly remember, that *this Accurſed Sin* will expoſe us to the Hatred of God and Men, and caſt us intoPerdition, to be upbraided and tormented by the great Deceiver, for ever and ever.

The

The Repentance of Nineveh.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex*,

On the Faſt-day for the *Plague*, 1721.

JONAH III. 5, 6.

So the People of Nineveh *believ'd God, and Proclaim'd a Faſt, and put on Sackcloth, from the greateſt of them, even to the leaſt of them.*

For Word came unto the King of Nineveh, *and he aroſe from his Throne, and he lay'd his Robe from Him, and cover'd him with Sackcloth, and ſate in Aſhes.*

THE Exemplary Humiliation and Repentance of *the Men of Nineveh* was mention'd by our Saviour, to upbraid the Jews, and condemn the ſtubborn Infidelity of that perverſe Generation. *Lu.* 11. 32.

1 Co. 10. 11 And it is alſo Recorded *for our Admonition*, and equally ſerves to bear Teſtimony againſt *us*, *upon whom the ends of the World are come.*

The Wickedneſs of the Men of Nineveh came up before God, and *the Violence that was in* Jonah 1. 2. *their Hands*, *cried ſo mightily* for Vengeance, that the Almighty was conſtrain'd to denounce ſpeedy Deſtruction againſt *that great City*, and to ſend his Prophet *Jonah* with that dreadful Meſſage, *Yet Forty Days*, *and* Jonah 3. 4. *Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.*

Now Nineveh was an exceeding Great City of Three Days Journey, *and Jonah had began to enter into the City a Days Journey*, when Jonah 3. 3, 4, 5. the People regarded the terrible Warning, and *believ'd God.*

The Prophet had not reach'd to the King's Court, but *Word came to him:* And *by the Decree of the King and his Nobles*, an Univerſal *Faſt was* immediately *Proclaim'd*; and every Order of Men join'd in the Humiliation, laying aſide the Pomp of Great- Jonah 3. neſs, and putting on the Garb of Sinners, 6, 7. *Covering themſelves with Sackcloth*, and *ſitting in Aſhes.*

And as their Sins had brought them down to a Level with the Beaſts that Periſh, ſo they made no Diſtinction between Themſelves and the Beaſts: for the Decree extended to Both; *Let neither Man nor Beaſt, Herd, or Flock, Taſt any thing; Let them not Feed, nor drink Water. But let Man and Beaſt be cover'd with Sackcloth, and cry mightily*

to

to God: yea, Let them turn every one from his evil Way, and from the Violence that is in their Hands. Who can tell, if God will turn and Repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we Periſh not? Jonah 3. 7, 8, 9.

This was the proper Language and Behaviour of ſincere Penitents. Theſe were *Fruits meet for Repentance.* And He that *diſcerns the Secrets of the Heart*, diſcern'd the Sincerity of their Humiliation, *and repented of the Evil that he had ſaid, that he would do unto them, and he did it not.* ver. 10.

So Remarkable a Caſe, that was thought worthy of Obſervation by the eternal Son of God, is certainly worthy to be ſtrictly obſerv'd, and deeply conſider'd by us. I ſhall therefore conſider,

Firſt, The Repentance of *Nineveh*, with all the Circumſtances of it. And,
Secondly, The happy Effect that was wrought by it. And,
Thirdly, Shall make an Application of Both, to the Occaſion, and Deſign of this Day's Solemnity.

And, *Firſt*, I ſhall conſider the Repentance of *Nineveh*, with all the Circumſtances of it. We may juſtly conclude, that the Inhabitants had *Fill'd up the Meaſure of Iniquity*, and were Ripe for Vengeance, ſince *the God that is ſlow to Anger*, had pronounc'd the Sentence of ſwift Deſtruction, and contracted the Time of Forbearance into the narrow ſpace of Forty Days.

A People ſo heavily Laden with Wickedneſs, and ſo peremptorily Doom'd to Perdition, muſt neceſſarily have Sinn'd themſelves into a State of groſs Stupidity, and Hardneſs of Heart.

The ſacred Hiſtory aſſures us, that *There were more than Sixſcore Thouſand Perſons, that* Jon. 4. 11. *could not diſcern between their Right-Hand, and their Left.*

And their own Confeſſion charges the Sins of *Violence* upon them; Sins that expreſs an open Defiance of God, and Strive for Maſtery with the Almighty.

Yet this wicked City, cover'd with the Darkneſs of Heatheniſm, and lying in the Depths of Iniquity, awakes and ſtirs up it ſelf at the Preaching of the Prophet, and ſhakes off its Brutiſh Stupidity, by an Active and Lively Faith in the True God.

It was rather to be Fear'd, that Ignorance and Impiety combin'd together, would have *ſet at nought all the Counſels* of *Jonah*, and rejected the unwelcome Preacher with thoſe Words of Diſdain, *What does this Babbler ſay?*

This is generally the Caſe, when *Wiſdom crieth without, and uttereth her Voice in the Streets. She Calls*, but abandon'd Sinners refuſe to hearken to her Voice: *She ſtretches out her Hand, and no Man regards her. The* Pro. 1. 20. *Scorners ſtill delight in their Scorning, and Fools* 22. 24 *hate Knowledge.*

So Fond are They of *making a Mock at Sin*, that they *Laugh at their* own *Calamity*, and

and mock when their Deſtruction cometh, when Deſtruction cometh as a Whirlwind: when Diſtreſs and Anguiſh cometh upon them.

Thus it was *in the days of Noah, when the long-ſuffering of God waited an Hundred and Twenty Years, while the Ark was Preparing.* 1 Pet. 3. 20

The Preacher of Righteouſneſs was *a Proverb of Reproach,* and *his Words ſeem'd to be as Idle Tales.* And though his continuing to Build the Ark was a Declaration of his firm Belief of *the determinate Counſel of God,* yet the ſinful World regarded not the Daily Admonition, but vainly Thought, that *their Houſes ſhould continue for ever, and their Dwelling Places ſhould endure from one Generation to another.* Preſumptuous Pride and Luxury blinded their wretched Souls, *till the Flood came as a Thief in the Night,* and ſwept away *the World of the Ungodly.* 2 Pet. 2. 5.

And thus alſo it will be, or rather thus it is, *in the Laſt Days.* For the Time is already come, when the Miniſters of God are had in Deriſion, for Delivering the Holy Oracles; and *the Terrors of the Lord* are profanely Ridicul'd, as the Dreams, or Deluſions of Men.

But it was not Thus with the Inhabitants of *Nineveh.* While the Prophet was as yet in the outward Parts of the City, the Sound of his Preaching was carried into every Quarter; and the Repentance of the People was as general as their Sin. The Alarm ran through the City, like the Sparks among the dry Stubble. Fear ſurpriz'd the Houſes

of the Mighty, and *Word came to the King. The King's Heart was chang'd in him, and his Lords were Aſtonied.* The Example of Repentance began at the Throne, and deſcended with a mighty Influence upon the People.

As the Power of the King could not exempt, or ſecure him from the Stroke of Vengeance; ſo it did not render him Forgetful of the common Danger, or flatter him with preſumptuous Hopes of Safety. But *He aroſe from his Throne, and laid his Robe from him.*

Behold, a Truly Glorious Spectacle! An Example worthy of Imitation! A Spectacle more Glorious than all the Appearances of Majeſty, and the Stately Enſigns of Power! He does not think that a Throne is a proper Seat for a Sinner devoted to Deſtruction; or that a Robe can cover the Shame and Pollution of Sin. But he falls to the Ground, from whence even Princes are taken, and ſits in Aſhes, to which the Mightieſt of Men muſt return. He is *cloath'd in Sackcloth*, inſtead of *wearing the Soft Raiment, that is in King's Houſes*; and abſtains from ordinary Food and Refreſhment, inſtead of *faring Delicately every Day.*

And how Contemptible ſoever He might appear in the Eyes of Profane wicked Men, he was more Highly exalted by debaſing Himſelf; and was infinitely more precious in the Sight of God, than the Haughty *Jezebel* that *Painted her Face, and Tyred her Head,* and met the Miniſter of Vengeance with Taunting Reproaches. Even

2 *Kings* 9. 30.

Even in Duſt and Aſhes and Sackcloth, He was more nobly Adorn'd than *Herod* was *in his Royal Apparel:* And how loathſome and deſpicable a Figure, the King and his Nobles might ſeemingly make, in the Time of their Humiliation, *yet even Solomon, in all his Glory, was not Arayed like one of theſe.*

The Robes of Innocence are more Beautiful than Veſtures of Gold; and when theſe are unhappily Loſt, Happy are They that clothe Themſelves with Humility, and put on the Garments of Repentance.

This was the Behaviour of *Theodoſius the Great*, when He firſt entred the Church, after He had been for ſome Time Excluded by St. *Ambroſe.*

He thought himſelf unworthy to ſtand in the Preſence of God, unworthy even to Kneel before him; and fell Proſtrate with his Face to the Ground, uſing thoſe words of the Pſalmiſt, *my Soul cleaveth to the Duſt, O Quicken thou me according to thy Word.*

With the ſame Humility, *Conſtantine*, The Firſt Chriſtian Emperor, order'd his Image to be Stamp'd on his Golden Medals, repreſenting him in the Poſture of a Supplicant, looking up to Heaven with his Arms Stretch'd forth to God.

And after the Pattern of the King of *Nineveh*, the Kings and Emperors in the Primitive Times, laid aſide their Crowns and Arms, and Guards, when they entred into the Houſe of the King of Kings: and their Penitential Devotions were a better Orna-

ment, and a ſtronger Defence, than Crowns, or Arms, or Guards.

At the higheſt Pitch of Greatneſs, there is no juſt Occaſion for Pride: There is too much Reaſon for Humility. *Why is Earth and Aſhes Proud? for He that is to Day a King, to Morrow ſhall Die. Tröuble and Unquietneſs* Purſueth every Man, *from Him that Sitteth on a Throne of Glory, to him that is Humbled in Earth and Aſhes.* The Changes and Chances of Human Life are the Seeds of Anxiety and Fear, to the Greateſt of Princes. Perplexing Thoughts enter into their inward Chambers, and compaſs about their Beds by Night. *A Little or Nothing is their Reſt: in their Sleep They are as in the Day of keeping Watch, troubled in the Viſions of Their Hearts, as if They were eſcap'd out of the Battle. When all is ſafe They awake, and marvel that the fear was nothing.*

Ecclus 40. 6, 7.

But were there no Uncertainty in their State, yet their Honour fades with their Life, and is but a gilded Vapour, paſſing away like the Beautiful Colours of the Rainbow.

But why ſhould I ſpeak of the Shortneſs of Life, ſince the Duration of the World is but as a Few Days. The Longeſt Part of it, is *but as Yeſterday*, which ſeem'd to be as Nothing, in its Fleeting Paſſage, and is now no more. And that which we ſo much expect and hope for, even To Morrow, will paſs as ſwiftly by, to be ſwallow'd up in endleſs Night to the Wicked, but in Everlaſting Day to the Righteous.

What

What then are all the Ornaments and Show of this World, ſince *the World* it ſelf *ſhall wax old like a garment, and be folded up like a veſture.* Heb. 1. 11, 12.

That Glorious Light that *rules the Day, ſhall be turn'd into Darkneſs,* and the Beauty of Heaven ſhall become *black as Sackcloth of Hair.* Rev. 6. 12.

But there are yet more Forcible Reaſons for Humility, even the Infinite Numbers of our Sins.

For *Theſe the ways of Nineveh mourn'd, and and all her Gates were* full of Sorrow and Confuſion. As every one had contributed his Share of Wickedneſs, to aggravate the Account, and make up the dreadful Sum, ſo every one *Humbled Himſelf, under the mighty Hand of God,* and Wept much, that much might be Forgiven. *All, from the Greateſt of Them even to the Leaſt, put on Sackcloth,* the Habit of Shame, and Guilt, and Miſery. The Diſtinctions of Birth and Fortune were Cancell'd by their Sins, and Forgotten at the near Approaches of their Puniſhment. And it was neceſſary that theſe Diſtinctions ſhould ceaſe, when they appear'd before an Angry God: For they will be utterly Aboliſh'd in *the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.* The People of every Age and Nation ſhall ſtand upon the ſame ſpacious Theatre, All equally expos'd to the All-ſeeing Eye, and Impartial Judgment of God. *There will be no reſpect of Perſons with him,* but He will *put all Principality, and Power,*

and Might, and Dominion, under his Feet.

And no Diſtinction ought to be made, even in this Life, when we come to conſider our ſelves as Sinful Creatures: For Sin debaſes every one that commits it, and brings down the Multitude of its Servants to the ſame inglorious Level.

Whatſoever Talents are given us by our Creator, whether they are the Gifts of Body, or Mind, the Advantages of Wealth, or Power, or Honour; yet our Sins caſt us down into the loweſt Sink of Infamy and Diſgrace. And thoſe that obey their Vices, notwithſtanding their outward Appearances of State, and promiſing Shows of Happineſs, are yet but Slaves bound Hand and Foot in the moſt ignominious Bondage and Slavery. Shame and Contempt is due to every Sinner, *from the Firſt-born of Pharoah, that ſits on the Throne, unto the Firſt-born of the Captive, that is in the Dungeon.* And a guilty Nation ſhould humbly confeſs their Wretchedneſs in the words of *Daniel, O Lord, to us belongeth Confuſion of Face, to our Kings, to our Princes, and to our Fathers, becauſe we have Sinn'd againſt thee.*

Dan. 9. 8.

When the Glories of the World ariſe before them, and they fondly admire the vain Show that covers them: Let them open thoſe *Painted Sepulchres*, their Breaſts, and Behold (if they can bear to Behold) them *full of all Uncleanneſs.*

This loathſome View muſt conſtrain them to abhor the Pageantry that deceiv'd them; and

and the flattering Occaſions of their Pride, muſt be turn'd into juſt Reaſons for Humility.

It was this Senſe of Things that poſſeſs'd the Hearts of the Men of *Nineveh*, when the whole City mourn'd in Sackcloth, and ſate in Aſhes. Nor did their Humiliation ſtop here, but they proceeded to execute a Holy Revenge upon Themſelves and their Vices, by a ſtrict Abſtinence from their daily Food and Refreſhment.

This plainly expreſs'd the Firmneſs of their Reſolution, to uſe a pious Importunity with God, and never to enjoy, even the neceſſary Supports of Life, till they had prevail'd for Pardon.

This was the beſt Expedient to bring them to an entire Senſe of their Duty, and a Lively Remembrance of God. And this alſo was a Puniſhment ſuitable to their Sins of Violence and Oppreſſion, the deepeſt Blots in their infamous Character.

When the Inſtruments of Vengeance are prepar'd, and the Sword of Deſtruction hangs over a wicked People, it is not a Time to enjoy the good Things of the World, or even to hearken to the common Demands of Nature.

It ſhould be almoſt their only Meat and Drink to do the Will of God, if there is yet an Opportunity of doing it. They ſhould cleave Inceſſantly to the Throne of Grace, if they are yet permitted to Kneel before it.

The Prophet *Daniel* was performing the Duties

Duties of Faſting and Supplication, when the moſt High ſent down his Angel to Comfort him. And God delights to Forgive his ſinful Creatures, when they *depart*
Luk. 2 37. *not from the Temple, but ſerve him with Faſtings and Prayers, Night and Day.*

Faſting is an acceptable Service to God, becauſe it Crucifies thoſe filthy Luſts that fight againſt him; and cleanſing the Soul from ſenſual Impurities, preſents it through the Blood of Chriſt, a Pure and Holy Sacrifice to God.

When the Body is gratified to the full, the Soul is preſs'd down to the Earth, and hindred from riſing *to God that gave it.* But Self-denial takes off the Clog that oppreſſes it, and ſuffers it to regard its higher Concerns, and aſcend with its natural Force towards Heaven. The Soul being withdrawn from the Objects of Senſe, has leiſure to recover itſelf by Reflection, and return to the practice of Virtue.

The wanton Prodigal thinks not of his Father's Houſe, whilſt his *Subſtance* anſwers *his Riotous Living:* But as ſoon as he is pinch'd with Want, *He ſays with himſelf, how many Hir'd-Servants of my Father have Bread enough and to ſpare, while I periſh with Hunger.* His deprav'd Inclination tempted him to *to take a Journey into a far Country:* but the Senſe of Miſery and Diſtreſs forc'd
Luke 15. him to *Ariſe and go to his Father.*

The Sons of *Jacob* remembred not *the Affliction of Joſeph*, till Famine and Impriſonment

ſonment preſs'd them ſore: then they felt *the Anguiſh of his Soul*, and were griev'd with the Thoughts of their unnatural Cruelty to their Brother. *Ge.42.21.*

And that ſevere Abſtinence, which the Men of *Nineveh* inflicted upon themſelves, was a proper Puniſhment for the Violence that was in their Hands.

It was but Juſt that the Oppreſſors ſhould want *the Staff of Bread*, and the Refreſhment of Water, ſince they had *taken away the Sheaf from the Hungry*, and compell'd *the Needy to Tread the Wine-preſſes, and ſuffer Thirſt.* *Job* 24.11, 12.

It was but Juſt that their Bowels ſhould Labour with griping Pain, ſince they had no Compaſſion for the Afflicted.

It was but Juſt that they ſhould wait long for their neceſſary Suſtenance, and deny their eagerly-craving Appetite, ſince they had *withheld the Poor from their deſire, and caus'd the Eyes of the Widow to fail.* *Job* 31.16.

Their Oppreſſion cried aloud for Revenge, and they aveng'd the Cauſe of the Poor, and puniſh'd themſelves, who were the Inſtruments of Cruelty.

Therefore *they turn'd their Feaſts into Mourning, and all their Songs into Lamentations, and put on Sackcloth upon all their Loyns. The Land trembled for their Iniquities, and the Mourning of every one that dwelt therein, was as the Mourning of an only Son.*

Nor did they only Grieve for their Evil Ways, but effectually turn'd from them, and renounc'd their Vices. This

This was the Intent of their Humiliation; and without This it had been Fruitleſs and Vain. Faſting, and Sackcloth, and Aſhes, are but the Symbols and Tokens of Repentance. And God will not be mock'd with empty Pretences, that paſs away like a Shadow. There may be Sinful Pride even in the Profeſſion of Humility; and the Dreſs of Mourning may be as Vain Pageantry as the Pomp of a Triumph.

But God, who ſaw the King of *Nineveh ariſe from his Throne*, ſaw him alſo Forſake *the Seat of Violence*. And therefore *He turn'd away from his Fierce Anger, becauſe every one, from the greateſt even to the leaſt*, Sincerely *Turn'd from his Evil way*. Which brings me,

Secondly, To conſider the happy Effect that was wrought by their Repentance.

A great and wonderful Effect! That the Prayers and Supplications of Sinful Duſt and Aſhes ſhould prevail for Mercy with an Offended God, and move him to Reverſe the Dreadful Sentence of Juſtice!

The Prophet *Jonah* was apprehenſive of this Change, and was unwilling to foretel their ſwift Deſtruction, *Knowing that the Lord was a gracious God, and Merciful, ſlow to Anger and of great Kindneſs, and repenteth him of the Evil. Therefore He fled from the Preſence of the Lord*, that he might not deliver a Meſſage that might be contradicted by the Event.

Jonah 4. 2.

But

But let not God be charg'd with Falſehood, for *He is not a Man, that he ſhould Lie, or as the Son of Man, that he ſhould Repent.*

His Threatnings of Temporal Evils proceed both from Mercy and Juſtice; and are but Conditional in themſelves, unleſs Sinful Men will make them Abſolute. It is Mercy, that pronounces the Sentence; and Juſtice, that is forc'd to execute it.

While we are yet in a State of Probation, we may avoid the Puniſhments that are prepar'd for us: Though the Sword is drawn, yet God will with-hold his Hand, if we turn to him that is going to Smite us.

But when *the Accepted Time* is paſt away, and *the Day of Grace* is come to an end, we ſhall be reclaim'd no more; *God* will *be no more Intreated.* The Sentence that dooms the Impenitent to eternal Miſery, is as Unchangeable as the Nature of God, and ſtands faſt for ever and ever. But Temporal Puniſhments are ſuſpended or remov'd, when the Occaſion of them is taken away.

Though our future Obedience cannot atone for our paſt Tranſgreſſions, yet God in his infinite Mercy accepts of our ſincere Repentance, inſtead of perfect Obedience: and when we Repent of the Evils, that we have done, He alſo Repents of the Evil that He intended to do againſt us.

After He has ſpoken bitter Things againſt a wicked People, and prepar'd them to expect *Lamentation, and Mourning, and Woe,* He is yet unwilling to bring his Judgments upon

upon them; He yet waits for an Opportunity of being Gracious to them. And when he finds the Tokens of their Amendment, *he Rejoyces as one that findeth great Spoils.*

When he sends forth the Astonishing Tydings of his Judgments, He says, Peradventure they may return to Themselves, and their Duty: it may be, They will yet *be Wise, and consider their Latter-end. I have no* Eze.18 32 *Pleasure in the Death of him that Dieth, saith the Lord, wherefore Turn your selves and Live.*

The Sentence pass'd upon *David*, for *the Matter of Uriah*, was suitable to the heinous Nature of his Guilt: But as soon as he confess'd, that *he had Sinn'd against the Lord*, his Pardon was Seal'd in Heaven, and *Nathan* bid him be of good Comfort, saying, *The Lord also hath put away thy Sin, Thou shalt not* 2Sam.12. 13. *Die.*

There is an Advocate in Heaven, always ready to Plead for Mercy; and the Bowels of Divine Compassion yearn over us, whensoever there is room for Forgiveness. *For our Heavenly Father knoweth our Frame; He re-* Ps.103.14 *membreth that we are but Dust.*

There is a Remarkable Instance of his Tenderness towards his Creatures, in the Case of *Nineveh*. When *Jonah* had executed his Commission, and foretold the near approaching Ruin of *That Great City*, he earnestly Expected the Accomplishment of his Prophesy: and the Prevention of it, by the Repentance of the People, and the Mercy of God, *displeas'd Jonah exceedingly, and He was very Angry.*

So

So Impatient was He, at the Disappointment, that he expostulated with God, and desired him to *Take away his Life*, thinking *it better for him to Die than to Live.*

And he made him a Booth, and sate under it in the Shadow, indulging his Grief and Anger, *till He might see what would become of the City.*

And the Lord God prepar'd a Gourd, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a Shadow over his Head, to deliver him from his Grief: So Jonah was exceeding Glad of the Gourd.

But He was soon depriv'd of his Pleasure; for *God prepar'd a Worm when the Morning rose the next Day: and it smote the Gourd that it wither'd.* Being bereav'd of this delightful Shade, *the Sun beat upon his Head, that he Fainted, and wish'd in himself to Die.*

His repeated Complaints inclin'd the God of Mercy to Reason with him; *Dost Thou well to be Angry for the Gourd?* And He presum'd to Abett and Encourage the Extravagance of his Passion, and said, *I do well to be Angry, even unto Death.*

And the Almighty retorted his Complaint upon him, and condescended to draw an Argument from the Example of the Prophet, to Justify his own Tenderness and Compassion: *Thou hast had Pity on the Gourd, for the which Thou hast not Labour'd, neither madest it grow, which came up in a Night, and perish'd in a Night. And should not I spare Nineveh, That Great City, wherein are more than Six-*

score

ſcore Thouſand Perſons, that cannot diſcern between their Right-hand and their Left-hand, and
Jonah 4. *alſo much Cattle.*

We may thus interpret this Forcible Argument. "Thou takeſt Pity on the Gourd, which receiv'd neither its Being, nor its Nouriſhment from Thee; which grew up without thy Knowledge or Care, in the Darkneſs of the Night, and return'd to Corruption before the Morning aroſe upon thee: it did not continue in one Stay, but was ſnatch'd from thy Embraces, before thy Affection could cleave to it: and yet Thou Mourneſt for it, as for *a Brother, or a Friend, which is as thine own Soul:* and thou ſuffereſt thy Grief to increaſe, and thinkeſt thou haſt abundant Reaſon to be angry for thy Loſs. Have not I therefore greater Reaſon to ſhew my Tender Pity, to an Innumerable Multitude of Creatures, that were faſhion'd by me in the Womb, and upheld from the Breaſts? ſhould I Snatch them away in an Inſtant, and Devour them with ſudden Deſtruction? when *I remember how ſhort their Time is, ſhould I make them for nought,* and deprive them even of their Tranſitory Being, and contract the Space that is *but a Span long?* Does not their Number Plead for Compaſſion? and is not their Ignorance ſome Excuſe for their Sin? Why ſhould I make them yet more wretched? Doſt Thou complain that thy Gourd had too ſhort a Duration, and periſh'd as Suddenly as it roſe? and Doſt Thou think that Forty

Forty Days are ſufficient for ſo many Thouſands of my Creatures?

Thus does the Almighty vouchſafe to vindicate his Proceedings, and turn the Repining of the Prophet into a Plea for himſelf. *Lord what is Man*, that thou ſhould condeſcend to Talk with him, and Reaſon in Defence of thy infinite Mercies! When an Act of Pardon is granted by an earthly Sovereign, his Subjects are glad to embrace it Implicitely, without a ſtrict Enquiry into the Terms and Conditions of it: it is enough that he is pleas'd to Pardon them; and they are bound to be Thankful for it. But *the King of Kings* diſdains not to bring forth his ſtrong Reaſons for his merciful Dealings with us; and ſtirs up our Bowels, even to excuſe (if I may ſo ſpeak) the Greatneſs of his Compaſſion.

Having conſider'd the Repentance of *Nineveh*, and its happy Effect, I proceed,

Thirdly, To make an Application of Both, to the Occaſion and Deſign of this Day's Solemnity.

The Men of Nineveh *ſhall riſe in Judgment with this Generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the Preaching of* Jonas; *and behold a greater than* Jonas *is here.* The Voice of God calls aloud for Repentance; and the Almighty Revenger makes bare his Arm, to pluck us out of the Jaws of Iniquity. His deſtroying Angel preaches to a ſinful World, and endeavours to check the Progreſs of Wickedneſs, ſay- *Mat.* 12. 41

ing, *It is enough, ſtay now thine Hand.*

The Hearts of the People of *Nineveh* were turn'd in a few Days, *like the Rivers of Waters:* But our Heavenly Monitor has continu'd to ſet our Danger before us, *from the beginning of the Year, even to the end of the Year.* We are now aſſembled a ſecond Time to deprecate his Judgments, and have daily more preſſing Reaſons to cry mightily to God. The Raging Peſtilence dwelt but in one City, or wandred no farther than the Borders of it, when we firſt aſſembled to Bewail our Sin and Danger. And great had been the Slaughter, if it had dwelt only there, and That alone had been the Habitation of Death.

But the King of Terrors having deſtroy'd, till he had almoſt made an end, has left that once Flouriſhing City bereav'd of Inhabitants, and waſted *with Miſery.* And whilſt *ſhe ſits ſolitary, Weeping ſore in the Night for* the Loſs of her People, her devouring Enemy enlarges his Camp, and ſpreads Deſolation round about.

The Time would fail me to ſpeak of the Amazing variety of Wretchedneſs that covers whole Cities and Provinces. Swift is the Progreſs of the Contagion, and the Communication of Miſery; *Swifter than the Chariots on the Tops of the Mountains, or the flaming Fire that devoureth the Stubble before it; the People are much Pain'd, all Faces gather Blackneſs. It runs to and fro in the Cities, and climbs up into the Houſes, and enters in at the Win-*

Windows like a Thief. The Camp of Death *is very great*, and his Conqueſts terrible. *He eats up the Nations, and pierces them thorow with his Arrows.*

Their tender Infants are brought forth, out of the Womb, to give up the Ghoſt, and as ſoon as they begin to Be, They are as if they had never Been. *They flie away as a Dream, and cannot be found, and are chas'd away as a Viſion of the Night.* Their Mother's Breaſts are full of Death, and their Food *is as the Poiſon of Aſps.*

Their young Men are caſt on the *Bed of Languiſhing*, in the midſt of their Strength; and their mighty Men go down in a Moment to the Grave.

The Living are unable to relieve each Other, and are conſtrain'd to deny the laſt Offices of Humanity to their departed Friends; applying the Words of our Saviour to their miſerable Condition, *Let the Dead bury their Dead.*

The Diary of their Afflictions muſt melt us into Pity; and it cannot but extort Compaſſion, even from the hardeſt Hearts, to read over the Daily-increaſing Catalogue of the Slain.

Their mighty Fortreſſes Languiſh, and the Places of Strength, from whence their Fleets and Armies us'd to iſſue forth, are become Deſolate.

The High-ways are unoccupied, the Inhabitants ceaſe: Their Traffick is avoided as Death, and their Merchandize is abhorr'd as a Nurſery of Diſeaſes.

And the wretched Nation ſeems to ſay to her Neighbouring Countries, *Mark me and be Aſtoniſh'd, and lay your Hand upon your Mouth.*

But it may be, we are harden'd againſt a ſenſe of Her Miſery, becauſe She was once an Enemy to our Country, and is ſtill an Enemy to our Religion.

We may therefore behold it in another View, and conſider Her Miſery, as if it were our own: a Caſe too probable, and a Conſideration of ſo near a concern to us, that it ought not to be neglected.

It was the juſt Fear of its dangerous Approaches, and a compaſſionate Senſe of the Calamities that would diſtreſs us, if the Contagion ſhould ſpread it ſelf over us, which occaſion'd This Day of Humiliation, and is mention'd in *the Decree of the King and his Nobles*, as the Reaſon that mov'd them to it.

And we are far from anſwering its Deſign, unleſs we are deeply ſenſible of the Greatneſs of the Evils that hang over us, the Heinouſneſs of our Guilt that calls for Vengeance, and the infinite Mercies of God that may yet pardon our Guilt, and forbear to Deſtroy us.

We have no grounds to preſume, hardly any grounds for the ſlighteſt Hopes; we can only ſpeak in the Humble and Diffident Language of the King of *Nineveh, Who can tell, if God will Turn away from his Fierce Anger that we Periſh not?*

We have ſeen the Peſtilence come in upon

a Foreign Land, *like a wide Breaking in of Waters.* And we have ſeen it Baffle all the Contrivances of Policy, the Inventions of Art, and the Efforts of Power. And it ſtill prevails and gathers Violence; neither can Art, nor Policy, nor Power, nor even the different Temper of different Seaſons aſſwage its Fury.

The Wiſdom of our Counſellors, and the Experience of Phyſicians have join'd together, ſtudying to prevent its Invading us, or to check its malignant Infection. But the Humiliation of This Day, is the wiſeſt Expedient; and, if God in his Mercy will accept it, This alone may be Effectual.

We cannot but greatly fear that Heavy Calamity, which may gradually approach, or be accidentally brought, or be juſtly inflicted upon us.

Our Eyes may ſoon *run down with Tears, and our Eyelids guſh out with Waters. The Voice of Wailing may be heard in our Streets, and every one may teach his Neighbour Lamentation. Death may come up into our Windows, and enter into our Palaces, to cut off the Children from without, and the young Men from the Street. Even the Carcaſſes of Men may fall as Dung upon the open Field, and as the Handful after the Harveſt-Man, and none may gather them.* Jer. 9.

Conſider this *ye Careleſs Ones*, that dwell at Eaſe, and regard not the Approach of *the evil Day.* Conſider what will be our Caſe, if the Deſtroying Angel ſhould Pitch his

Tents in any Part of our Land. The corrupted Branch will be ſeparated from the Body, and depriv'd of neceſſary Relief. Friendſhip and Humanity will be unable to Perform their Comfortable Offices; and the means of Correſpondence will be cut off. The Houſes of the Sick will be ſhut up; and diſeas'd Families be confin'd in their Loathſome Priſons, beholding nothing but Helpleſs Miſery. Parents will dread the Sight of their Belov'd Children; and Filial Piety will in vain endeavour to exert it ſelf towards the Dying Parents. Heaps of Dead will offend the aking Eyes of the Sick: and the corrupted Carcaſſes will poiſon the Living Bodies, that will hardly bear the Stink of their own Corruption. They that carry forth the Dead, will fail under their Burthen, and immediately want that needful Office which they attempted to Perform.

The Art of the Phyſician will be Loſt in fruitleſs Searches for the Cauſe of the Diſtemper; and no natural Remedy will avail, when it ſtruggles with the Vengeance of God.

Timely Precautions will not prevent its Progreſs; nor will the ſtrictly Guarded Lines ſet Bounds to the Peſtilence. Day by Day it will ſpread like a Gangrene; and every Hour will make a freſh Addition to the Territories of Death.

It therefore behoves us, as we value all that is dear to us, to Turn from our Wickedneſs without Delay, leſt *God ſhould caſt upon*

on us the Furiousness of his Wrath, Anger, Displeasure and Trouble, and send evil Angels amongst us. We cannot too deeply Humble our selves for the Wretchedness of our Guilt, before we are made more Wretched by our Punishment.

It highly concerns us to cast off the whole Mass of our sinful Corruption, and to renounce every Vice that has gotten the Dominion over us. But it more especially concerns us, to put away with Abhorrence, our most flagrant Sins, and provoking Abominations.

It was Murmuring against the Lord, and casting unjust Reproaches upon his Ministers, that kindled the Divine Indignation against the *Israelites*; So that he would have *consum'd them in a Moment*, by *the Plague that was Begun*, had not his Mercy interpos'd, and *Stood with Aaron between the Living and the Dead*, to accept *the Incense offer'd* by the Priest, as *an Atonement for the People.* *Nu.16.48.*

It was the Lewdness of *Israel* that *provok'd the Lord to Jealousy*, when *Twenty and Four Thousand Died of the Plague*; and *Phinehas* put an End to the Slaughter, by his Zeal for God. *Numb.25.*

It was the Presumption of *David*, in *Numbering the People*, and Glorying in the Strength of *Eight Hundred Thousand Valiant Men*, that brought the Pestilence upon the Land, and lessen'd that mighty Number, by the Destruction of *Seventy Thousand Men.* *2Sam.24.*

It was the vaunting Pride, and insolent

Blaſphemy of *Senaccherib*, that *came up into the Ears of* the Almighty, when *he ſent forth his Angel into the Camp of the Aſſyrians, and ſmote an Hundred and Fourſcore and Five Thouſand: and when they Aroſe early in the Morning, Behold They were all dead Corpſes.* And thoſe terrible Armies, that *dried up all the Rivers of the Beſieg'd Places with the Soles of their Feet, were as the Graſs of the Field; and*
Iſaiah 37. *as the green Herb, as the Graſs on the Houſe-Tops, and as Corn Blaſted before it be grown up.*

And it was the Oppreſſion and *Violence* of *Nineveh*, that haſtned the Doom of *That Bloody City*, and brought its Deſtruction near, even to its Gates.

And may not theſe Sins be equally Charg'd upon us? Does not *our Heart Tremble?* Is it not *mov'd out of its Place*, at the Mention of theſe Tranſgreſſions? Is there not impious Murmuring, profligate Lewdneſs, haughty Preſumption, inſolent Blaſphemy, and violent Oppreſſion, in our Streets? Are not Truth and Simplicity Departed, and Innocence and Integrity *made a Prey?*

But there is yet a more dreadful Example before us; a yet Heavier Charge againſt us.

Jeruſalem was once *the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of the whole Earth. But the Lord hath ſwallow'd up all her Habitations, and thrown down the ſtrong Holds of the Daughter of Judah*, becauſe ſhe Rejected the Son of God, and *Crucified the Lord of Glory.* For this amazing Wickedneſs She was betray'd by Factions, and waſted by Famine within,

and

and ſtraiten'd and beſieg'd without, and *the Romans took away both her Place and Nation.* And *the Ways of Sion ſhall for ever Mourn, her Gates ſhall be for ever Deſolate.*

And yet in defiance of this dreadful Admonition, we *Crucify the Son of God afreſh, and Deny the Lord that bought us.* Even whilſt we Humble our Selves with Faſting, there are many that Glory in *doing Deſpight to the Bleſſed Jeſus, that faſted Forty Days, and Forty Nights for our Sakes.* Matth. 4.

Whilſt we deſire to Avert the Conſuming Plague, there are many that caſt Reproaches upon Him *that bore our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, and heal'd all manner of Sickneſs, and Diſeaſes among the People.*

Whilſt our Danger conſtrains us to *cry Mightily to God,* There are many that Blaſpheme our Redeemer, who Pray'd earneſtly for our Pardon, and *Sweat as it were great Drops of Blood* under the Burthen of our Sins.

Whilſt there is yet a Space for Repentance, there are many that Depretiate thoſe Infinite Merits, through which alone our Repentance will be Accepted.

While we are yet permitted to offer up our Spiritual Sacrifices, There are many that violate the excellent Dignity of our *Eternal High-Prieſt, who gave Himſelf a Sacrifice for us.*

Let the Senſe of This crying Sin, and all other Abominations, fill us with unfeigned Sorrow and Humility.

Let us *hide our ſelves in the Duſt together,* and cover our Faces with Confuſion. Let

Let our King and our Princes *caſt down their Crowns before the Throne of God, and worſhip the Lamb that Liveth for ever and ever. Let Small and Great ſtand in Awe of Him,* and endeavour to avoid the Fury of his Wrath.

Let us fly to *the Mercy-Seat,* while we may have Acceſs to it, and cleave ſtedfaſtly to the Holy Place, till we can obtain Forgiveneſs.

Let us Beſeech the Holy Jeſus to waſh us in his precious Blood, and offer up the Incenſe of our imperfect Prayers.

Let us beſeech him to look down with Pity and Compaſſion on our Afflicted Brethren, and *Take away his Plague from them, before they are Conſum'd by the means of his heavy Hand.*

Let their Troubles *be ever in our Sight,* and their Calamities be conſider'd as an Earneſt of our own.

And, Let the United Voices of the whole Nation *cry mightily to God,* for his Patience and Forbearance.

Hear our Prayers, O Lord, and with thine Ears conſider our Calling; hold not Thy Peace at our Tears. Lord what is *our Hope; Truly our Hope is even in Thee. Father,* if it be thy good Pleaſure, *Let This Cup paſs from us: Nevertheleſs, not as we will, but as Thou wilt.* But, O Lord moſt Holy, O God moſt Mighty, O Holy and merciful Saviour, Thou moſt worthy Judge Eternal, ſuffer us not at our laſt Hour for any Pains of Death to fall from Thee: Deliver us not into the Bitter Pains of Eternal Death.

Mary

Mary Magdalene.

A SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex.*

LUKE VII. 40, 41, 42, 43.

And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Simon, *I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on.*

There was a certain Creditor which had two Debters: The one ought him Five Hundred Pence, and the other Fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt?

Simon *anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt rightly judged.*

OUR Bleſſed Saviour *came to ſeek and ſave thoſe that were loſt*; and he eagerly embrac'd, and wiſely improv'd every Opportunity of doing Good to

Jews Scorning Condescend

the Souls of Men. Whenſoever he vouchſafed to converſe with the Jews, or to accept of any Invitation from them, he endeavour'd to correct their miſtaken Judgments, and raiſe their Minds to a juſt Senſe of ſpiritual Things. And whilſt he receiv'd a little bodily Food or Refreſhment, he took occaſion from thence, to feed them with *the Bread of Life*, and refreſh them with *the Waters that flow for ever.*

We may find ſeveral Inſtances of this kind, in the ſacred Store-houſe of the Goſpel. Thus when he had call'd *Matthew* the Publican from *the Receipt of Cuſtom, it came to paſs, as he ſat at Meat in his Houſe, that many other Publicans and Sinners ſate alſo with Jeſus and his Diſciples:* And the Phariſees, who pretended to the ſtricteſt Purity and Holineſs, were offended at him, and *ſaid to his Diſciples, How is it, that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?* And Jeſus hearing their cenſorious Remarks, return'd this Anſwer to them; *They that are whole have no need of the Phyſician, but they that are ſick: I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*

Mark 2. 15, 16, 17.

Thus alſo when he viſited *Zaccheus, the Chief of the Publicans*, and the preciſe Phariſees *murmur'd, ſaying, that he was gone to be Gueſt with a Man that was a Sinner*; he regarded not their uncharitable Reflections, but ſpake the Words of Comfort to *Zaccheus, This Day Salvation is come to this Houſe. For the Son of Man is come to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt.*

Luke 19 7, 9, 10.

And

And he never fail'd to expreſs a compaſſionate Tenderneſs towards the truly penitent Soul; and never more fully expreſs'd it, than in the remarkable Caſe that is now before us. *For one of the Phariſees deſir'd him, that he would eat with him. And he went into the Phariſee's Houſe, and ſate down to Meat. And behold a Woman in the City, which was a Sinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſate at Meat in the Phariſee's Houſe, brought an Alabaſter-Box of Ointment, and ſtood at his Feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his Feet with Tears, and did wipe them with the Hairs of her Head, and kiſſed his Feet, and anointed them with the Ointment. Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw it,* he wonder'd that our Lord ſhould ſuffer her to touch him; and began to draw a Concluſion from it, injurious to our Saviour's Honour; for *he ſpake within himſelf, ſaying, This Man, if he were a Prophet, would have known who, and what manner of Woman this is that toucheth him, for ſhe is a Sinner.*

Jeſus knowing what paſs'd within the Phariſee's Breaſt, immediately gave an effectual Anſwer to his ſecret Inſinuation; and having a Matter of great Importance to propoſe to him, he beſpoke his Attention to it; *Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay to thee*; and the Phariſee being prepar'd to hear, *ſaid, Maſter, ſay on.* And then he ſtated the Caſe plainly before him, and deliver'd a familiar Parable, asking his Judgment upon it. *There was a certain Creditor had two Debters; the one ought five Hundred Pence, and the other Fifty. And*

when

when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him moſt?

Simon having ſo fair a View of their different Obligations, could not but make a right Eſtimate, and give his immediate Judgment upon them; and therefore *he anſwer'd, and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt.* This Judgment was drawn from the common Senſe and Experience of Mankind, and was agreeable to the natural Effect which Benefits have upon the Minds of Men. And Jeſus ratify'd and confirm'd the Sentence, *ſaying,* *Thou haſt rightly judg'd.* Luke 7.

Thus was the Phariſee led unawares into a juſt Approbation of the Thing that he had unjuſtly condemn'd. The Parable was ſo plain, that it wanted no Interpreter; it directed and apply'd it ſelf; and unleſs the Phariſee were wilfully blind, he muſt neceſſarily ſee who was *the Debter that ought five Hundred Pence, and had nothing to pay,* and who was *the Creditor that frankly forgave her all the Debt*; and muſt alſo acknowledge, according to his own impartial Judgment, that *ſhe would love much, becauſe much had been forgiven her.*

Our Saviour took off his Thoughts from the Multitude of Sins that ſhe had committed, and fix'd them on that ſincere and ardent Love which *cover'd a Multitude of Sins.*

But leſt the Phariſee ſhould fail even yet to diſcern the full Scope and Deſign of the Parable, Jeſus proceeds to illuſtrate the Caſe of

of the affectionate Penitent. *And he turn'd to the Woman, and ſaid unto* Simon, *ſeeſt thou this Woman? I enter'd into thine Houſe, thou gaveſt me no Water for my Feet; but ſhe hath waſh'd my Feet with Tears, and wip'd them with the Hairs of her Head. Thou gaveſt me no Kiſs; but this Woman, ſince the Time I came in, hath not ceas'd to kiſs my Feet. Mine Head with Oil thou didſt not anoint; but this Woman hath anointed my Feet with Ointment. Wherefore I ſay unto thee, her Sins, which are many, are forgiven, for ſhe lov'd much; but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little.* Luke 7. 44, 45, 46, 47.

Thus did our Saviour diſplay the ſeveral Inſtances and Expreſſions of her Love to him, and draw a Compariſon in her Behalf, to convince the Phariſee of the Tenderneſs of her Affection.

And after he had brought the Parable home to her, he gave her the full Aſſurance of Hope, with thoſe powerful Words, *Thy Sins are forgiven, thy Faith hath ſav'd thee, go in Peace.* Luke 7. 48, 50.

And ſince theſe Things *were written for our Learning*, it behoves us to dwell ſome Time longer upon the Behaviour of this famous Penitent, and to conſider the Intent of the Parable, till we are thoroughly affected with it.

To this End I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, What was the Name and Character of this Woman, and *how much ſhe lov'd, becauſe much had been forgiven her.*

Secondly,

Secondly, That we ſhould remember *how much* has been *forgiven us*, that we alſo may *Love much*. And,

Thirdly, That we ſhould copy after the divine Goodneſs, by *Forgiving much*, that our Enemies may *Love us much* again.

And *Firſt*, I am to ſhew what was the Name and Character of this Woman, and how *much ſhe lov'd*, becauſe *much was forgiven her*.

It is the Opinion of learned Men, that this Perſon, ſo eminently diſtinguiſh'd in the Goſpel, was *Mary Magdalene*, once a wretched Slave to Sin, and taken Captive by Satan, but afterwards reſcued from his accurſed Dominion, and reconcil'd to God, by a perfect and unfeign'd Repentance.

When ſhe came into the Phariſee's Houſe, ſhe was call'd *a Woman that was a Sinner*, which ſeem'd to imply, that ſhe had been notoriouſly Sinful, and ſo infamouſly Wicked, as to become *a Proverb of Reproach* for her Wickedneſs; and therefore the Phariſee wonder'd greatly, that Chriſt ſhould permit her to come near to him, and bear to be touch'd by one ſo much defil'd with Sin.

Mar. 16. 9. *Luke* 8. 2. And we find in other Parts of the Goſpel, that our Saviour had *Caſt Seven Devils out of her*: And we may juſtly ſuppoſe, that thoſe *unclean Spirits* had carried her into all Manner of Evil, and plung'd her into the Depth of Iniquity.

But

But were there no other Proof of her former Wickedneſs, it would be ſufficient, that Chriſt has told us, *much was forgiven her.*

Great was his Mercy in meaſuring her *Love* by his own *Forgiveneſs.* And ſince he was pleas'd to draw a Veil over her Sins, it will not become us to uncover them any farther, or to enquire too particularly what were her Crimes. Let them be as *a dark Cloud,* while her future Actions appear Beautiful and Glorious as *a Pillar of Fire.*

After her Converſion, ſhe was diſtinguiſh'd by St. *Luke,* as one of thoſe devout and charitable Women that accompanied our Saviour in his Travels, and *miniſter'd to him of their Subſtance.* *Mark* 8. 2, 3.

And when Jeſus enter'd into the Houſe of *Martha,* as into the Houſe of a Friend, we may juſtly believe that it was the ſame *Mary that ſate at his Feet, and heard his Word.* *Lu.* 10. 39. Behold the humble Poſture of an attentive Diſciple! So cloſe was her Attention, that ſhe entirely neglected all other Buſineſs; and her Siſter reprov'd her for that Neglect. But our Lord gave her that honourable Teſtimony, *Mary hath choſen that good Part, which* v. 42. *ſhall not be taken away from her.*

Her modeſt and humble Behaviour endear'd her to Chriſt, and inclin'd him to make her Partaker of his intimate Friendſhip.

It was alſo, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, *John* 11. 2, *this* Mary, *whoſe Brother* Lazarus *was ſick. There-* 3. 5. 32. *fore his Siſter ſent unto Jeſus, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt, is ſick. Now Jeſus*

lov'd Martha, *and her Siſter, and* Lazarus. And when *Mary* went forth to meet Jeſus, *and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his Feet, ſaying, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not Died.* With ſo firm a Faith did ſhe believe in Chriſt! with ſuch unſhaken Confidence did ſhe rely on his Compaſſion!

After the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, Jeſus was invited to a Supper, at which *Lazarus was preſent, whom he rais'd from the Dead.* And behold *Mary Magdalene* came in, and *brought an Alabaſter-Box of Ointment.* Being deſirous to make *an Offering* to her Lord, *ſhe would not make it of that which did coſt her nothing.* For we learn from St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, that it was *very precious Ointment*; and from St. *John*, that it was *Ointment of Spikenard, very coſtly.*

Mat 26.7. *John* 12. 1, 2, 3.

Having a deep Sorrow and Contrition for the Number of her Sins, ſhe preſum'd not to appear before his Face, but *ſtood at his Feet, behind him weeping, as if her Head were Waters, and her Eyes a Fountain of Tears.* And theſe Tears that flow'd from penitential Sorrow, were alſo Teſtimonies of her Affection: For *ſhe began to waſh his Feet with Tears, and wip'd them with the Hairs of her Head*; neither did her Love ſtop here; *ſhe alſo kiſs'd his Feet, and anointed them with the Ointment*; and ſhe pour'd it in ſuch Meaſure upon him, that *the Houſe was fill'd with the Odour of the Ointment.*

Before ſhe came into the Houſe, we may imagine that ſhe enquir'd after him, in the Words

Words of the Church to Chriſt, *Tell me, (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy Flock to reſt at Noon?* Song of Solomon 1.7.

And when ſhe is miniſtring to him, we may apply thoſe other Words of the Church to this devout Woman: *While the King ſitteth at his Table, my Spikenard ſendeth forth the Smell thereof.* v. 12.

The Phariſee was ſurpriz'd at our Saviour's accepting theſe Offices from *a Woman that was a Sinner:* And *Judas was mov'd with Indignation, and ſaid, to what Purpoſe is this Waſte? Why was not this Ointment ſold for Three Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor?* But Jeſus receiv'd her with an affectionate Welcome, and graciouſly eſteem'd theſe Inſtances of her Kindneſs, as if they were the laſt Offices to her Dying Friend. For *he ſaid, let her alone, why trouble you her? ſhe hath wrought a good Work on me, ſhe hath done what ſhe could; ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my Body to the Burying.* And he did not reward her Love with a tranſient Commendation, but fix'd and eſtabliſh'd it for ever. *Verily I ſay unto you, whereſoever this Goſpel ſhall be preach'd throughout the whole World, this alſo that ſhe hath done, ſhall be ſpoken of, for a Memorial of her.* Matth. 26. Mark 14. Luke 7. John 12.

And it ſtands recorded by each of the Evangeliſts, and has been publiſh'd *in every Nation under Heaven. Becauſe of the Savour of her good Ointments, her Name is as Ointment pour'd forth.* Her Fame *is gone out into all Lands,* and her Glory *unto the Ends of the* Song of Solomon 1.3.

World. And *Mary Magdalene*'s Love to our Saviour ſhall be deliver'd down from Age to Age in that ſacred Hiſtory, which will never be blotted out?

But we may ſtill conſider other Expreſſions of her Affection to him. She was one of *thoſe* devout *Women* that *follow'd him* towards the Place of his Crucifixion, *and be-*
Lu.23.27. *wail'd and lamented him.*

She alſo *ſtood by the Croſs of Jeſus*, with his Mother, and fix'd her weeping Eyes upon him, partaking of thoſe Sorrows that pierc'd through *the Breaſt that bare him, and the Paps that gave him ſuck.*

Neither Tribulation, nor Diſtreſs, nor Perſecution, nor Peril, nor Sword could ſeparate her from him. Her Soul clave to him, even to his Death; nay, it was ſtronger than the Grave.

When *Nicodemus* prepar'd for the Burial
Lu.23.55. of his dead Body, ſhe *follow'd after, and beheld the Sepulchre, and how his Body was laid.*

And her Love to him would hardly ſuffer her to *give Sleep to her Eyes, nor Slumber to her Eyelids*, till ſhe had ſhewn her tendereſt Care of her departed Lord. For as ſoon as the Sabbath was paſt, *Mary Magdalene came early, while it was yet dark, to the Sepulchre, bringing*
John20.1. *ſweet Spices to anoint him.* And when *ſhe ſaw the Stone taken away from the Door of the Sepulchre*, ſhe complain'd to St. *Peter, and to that Diſciple whom Jeſus lov'd, and ſaid unto them, they have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and*
v. 2. *we know not where they have laid him.*

After-

Afterwards she stood at the Sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stoop'd down and look'd into the Sepulchre, and saw two Angels in White, sitting, the one at the Head, and the other at the Feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain: And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turn'd her self back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not, that it was Jesus. And Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the Gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus, finding her still ignorant of him, *said unto her,* Mary. *And she turn'd her self,* and presently acknowledg'd him, *saying,* Rabboni, *which is, Master.* John 20.

Thus did her Love continue from his Death to his Rising again; and he *wip'd away all Tears from her Eyes,* by vouchsafing her his first Appearance after his Resurrection, and sending her to his Disciples with the joyful News of his being Risen from the Dead.

How Happy was *this Messenger that brought these good Tidings,* that gave this delightful Assurance to his afflicted Friends, Your Redeemer liveth!

How Compassionate is Jesus, *who did not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, but bound up this broken-hearted Sinner, and comforted her that mourn'd, and gave her* Isa. 61. 1, 3.

Beauty for Aſhes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs.

The Example of this famous Penitent, ſhould, as I am

Secondly, to ſhew, Teach us to remember how *much has been Forgiven us*, that we alſo may *Love much.*

The Goodneſs of God in giving his Bleſſings to Mankind, requires a large Return of Gratitude from us; and we ſhould find our Debt of Love increaſing to a prodigious Sum, were we only to conſider the Gifts which his Bounty daily ſheds upon us.

But there is alſo Forgiveneſs with thee, O God, therefore ſhalt thou be more abundantly lov'd. This doubles all other Bleſſings, and gives us, our Selves, our Souls and Bodies, which were forfeited and loſt, by the Multitude of our Sins.

Alas! the beſt of us *fall ſeven Times a Day*, and too many of us have fallen ſo often into Wickedneſs, that we juſtly deſerve to be branded and diſtinguiſh'd by the infamous Character of Sinners; and were our Love to riſe in Proportion to the Meaſure of our Sins, which God vouchſafes to forgive, none of us could *love him little*, for the moſt perfect amongſt us are *forgiven much.*

If we look back to a few of the Days that are paſt, we ſhall ſee our Account charg'd with a heavy Burthen of Sins: every Addition to our Life has been attended with an Addition to our Guilt; and more than *ſuffi-*

cient

cient to every Day, has been the Evil thereof. How then can we number the Tranſgreſſions of our whole Life, or make an Eſtimate of the long Arrears of Treſpaſſes, that are thrown together in confus'd Heaps!

It is difficult to bear a tranſient View of them: It is hardly poſſible to ſurvey the odious Malignity of every Vice, and the loathſom Shame of our vile Abominations. The uneaſy Reflection upon them, covers us with *Confuſion of Face*; and *we are not able to look up, becauſe our Wickedneſſes are gone over our Head, and are like a ſore Burthen, too heavy for us to bear.* Pſ. 38. 4.

But though we abhorr the Sight of our ſelves, and cannot endure the Thoughts of our Uncleanneſs, yet our offended God ſtretches out his Arms to embrace us, and is ready to *waſh us throughly from our Iniquities, and cleanſe us from our Sins.* Pſ. 51. 2.

There is *a Fountain open'd to purge us from Sin, and from Uncleanneſs*, even the Fountain of our Saviour's precious Blood. Zech. 13. 1

And we may behold an Emblem of the kind Offices, which he delights to perform to us, in his Behaviour towards his Diſciples. *He roſe from Supper, and laid aſide his Garments, and took a Towel, and girded himſelf. After that, he pour'd Water into a Baſon, and began to waſh the Diſciples Feet, and wipe them with the Towel wherewith he was girded.* Jo. 13. 4, 5.

Thus the Lord of Glory condeſcends to miniſter to us alſo, that *though our Sins be as Scarlet, they may be as White as Snow, though* Iſ. 1. 18.

they are Red as Crimſon, they may be as Wool.

The Abatement of a Debt, is a welcome Inſtance of Kindneſs. And *the unjuſt Steward* rightly judg'd, that he ſhould beſpeak the Love and Favour of *his Lord's Debters*, by leſſening their Charge, and *bidding one of them take his Bill, and write down fifty inſtead of an hundred Meaſures of Oil, and another to write down fourſcore inſtead of an hundred Meaſures of Wheat.* Surely therefore our Lord has the ſtrongeſt Claim to our Love, ſince he has not only abated a Part of our Debt, but *frankly forgiven it all.*

Luke 16.

Great had his Mercy been, had he forborn to impute our Sins to us, or place them to our Account. And it is infinitely greater, as he transferr'd it from us, and plac'd it to his own Account. He became a Debter in our Stead, and in order to procure a general Diſcharge for us, he made an infinite Satisfaction to his Father's Juſtice.

Behold our Redeemer upon the Croſs, cancelling the *Hand-writing that was againſt us*, and comforting *Mary Magdalene*, and all other true Penitents, with thoſe Important Words, *It is finiſh'd!* Can we ever forget ſuch an Obligation as this? Can we delay to ſhew our Gratitude, when all the Return that is requir'd of us, is Love? Will not ſuch amazing Kindneſs draw Tears out of our Rocky Hearts, and cauſe *Waters to guſh out like Rivers?* The Senſe of our multiply'd Offences againſt ſo good a God, ſhould make us *ſit upon the Ground and keep Silence; our Eyes*

ſhould

ſhould fail with Tears, and our Bowels ſhould be troubled at the Remembrance of our Baſeneſs.

The mournful Dreſs of the affectionate Penitent, is more amiable in the Sight of God, than Ornaments of Gold; and he delights to cloath us with Robes of Glory, when we are truly ſenſible of our Nakedneſs and Shame.

Thus when *the Prodigal Son* was diſpos'd to *ariſe and go to his Father*, and thought himſelf *unworthy to be call'd his Son*, and humbly deſir'd to be *as one of his hir'd Servants*; the compaſſionate Father could not refrain himſelf from going forth to meet him, but *when he was yet a great Way off, he ran and fell on his Neck, and kiſs'd him*; and when his Penitent Son *ſaid unto him, Father I have ſinn'd againſt Heaven, and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be call'd thy Son; the Father* immediately *ſaid unto his Servants, bring forth the beſt Robe, and put it on him, and put a Ring on his Hand, and Shoes on his Feet, and bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.* And as the Father rejoic'd with double Joy, becauſe *his Son had been Dead, and was Alive again, had been Loſt, and was Found:* So his Son could not but love him with double Affection; becauſe he became, as it were, a Second Time his Father, and Begot him again, by calling him again his Son. *Luke* 15.

The mention of this glorious Inſtance leads me,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, to ſhew, That we ſhould copy after the divine Goodneſs, by *forgiving much*, that our Enemies may *love us much* again.

We have ſeen the Mercy of our Saviour propos'd to us for our Imitation; but leſt that great Example ſhould ſeem too high for our Reach, it has been brought nearer to us, under the familiar Inſtance of *a Creditor forgiving his Debter*. And the Caſe propos'd to the Phariſee was ſo plain and obvious to his Reaſon, that he immediately gave Judgment agreeable to it; and by giving it immediately, he ſhew'd that it was the natural Reſult of his Thoughts, and flow'd from the common Senſe and Opinion of Mankind: and therefore we may juſtly conclude, that as long as Gratitude remains in the World, the Forgiveneſs of great and heinous Injuries will procure a Return of Love, in Proportion to the Meaſure of our Forgiveneſs. And the Phariſee's ready Anſwer, not only ſhews that it is poſſible, but alſo that it is highly probable, it ſhould produce this Effect. And this Judgment of Man is of the greater Weight, becauſe it was ratify'd by the Judgment of God.

Our Saviour rejoic'd to *overcome Evil with Good*, and the greater *the Evil* was, ſo much the more he delighted in the Conqueſt: With what Pleaſure did he ſpeak of *Mary Magdalene!* How particularly did he mention, how largely did he illuſtrate every Teſtimony of her Affection! He remember'd the Greatneſs of

of her Sins, only that he might ſhew the Greatneſs of her Repentance, and lov'd to ſet the Penitent in Oppoſition to the Sinner. No one had been more at Enmity with him; no one was honour'd more with his Friendſhip.

Methinks our Ambition ſhould move us to imitate this Example; and we ſhould be quite tranſported with the Thoughts of changing an inveterate Enemy, into a faithful Friend. Perhaps his Offences are many, ſo much the more he ſtands in need of Forgiveneſs. And the more we forgive him, ſo much the more he may love us, in Return for ſo large a Meaſure of Forgiveneſs. *Thus ſhall we heap Coals of Fire upon his Head*, and melt him into unfeign'd Sorrow for his paſt Offences. Ro. 12. 20.

And the Hopes of this Succeſs are enough to enliven our Endeavours, and make us unwearied in doing Good, that we may at length obtain an entire Conqueſt of Evil.

How partially ſoever we magnify the Injuries we have receiv'd; and how much ſoever we labour to add to their Aggravations, yet the Intent of the Parable will ſtill reach our Caſe, and we can never find a ſufficient Objection againſt Forgiveneſs.

If any ſufficient Objection could have been found, the Father muſt have found it againſt embracing his Prodigal Son: for he had receiv'd a large *Portion* from him; and having caſt off the Affection that is natural to Children, he had entirely left his Father's Houſe,

Luke 15. Houſe, gone *into a far Country, waſted his Subſtance by lewd and riotous Living*, and debas'd himſelf into a mean and ſervile Condition; yet the tender Father over-rules all theſe Objections, as ſoon as his Son is willing to return; and thinks with himſelf, that the pardon'd Prodigal will love him with the ſtrongeſt Affection, and be for ever endear'd to him, by remembring how much has been forgiven him.

What a glorious Spectacle is the Man that is equally ready to give up all his Prejudices, and gladly removes every Let and Hindrance that may prevent a Reconciliation!

We have a remarkable Inſtance of this Kind, in *Joſeph*'s Behaviour towards his Brethren: When *they could not anſwer him*, at his firſt Diſcovery of himſelf, *being troubled at his Preſence*, he ſpoke kindly to them, *Come near to me, I pray you, I am* Joſeph *your Bro-*
Gen. 45. *ther, whom ye ſold into Egypt. Now therefore be not griev'd, nor angry with your ſelves that ye ſold me hither; for God did ſend me before you, to preſerve Life; ſo now it was not you that ſent me hither, but God.*

How Charitably did he cover their Faults! How Gladly did he find Excuſes to leſſen their Injuries! How Mildly did he Talk with them to abate their Fears! and when he had encourag'd them to approach towards him, How Affectionately did *he Kiſs all his Brethren!* With what Tranſports of Joy did he *weep over them!* When the Fame thereof was heard in *Pharaoh*'s Houſe, How well did

it

it *pleaſe* Pharaoh *and all his Servants!* And How Pleaſant muſt it be to be Witneſſes of ſuch a Reconciliation! How much more Pleaſant to be reconcil'd to our offending Brother, and vanquiſh our Enemy by the Embraces of a Friend!

That we may compoſe our ſelves into this forgiving Temper, Let us deeply conſider the Multitude of our Sins againſt God. *O how great is the Sum of them!* Let us endeavour to remember, how often, how perverſly, how ungratefully we have offended him. And, Let us fill our Hearts with Sorrow, for having made ſo unnatural a Return to our beſt Friend.

When our Hearts are humbled with this afflicting Conſideration, and ſoften'd into an affectionate Tenderneſs, they will be fit to receive the Impreſſions of Mercy, and will relent, and yield to our Penitent Brother.

Let us ſuppoſe our ſelves to be in St. *Peter's* Place, *weeping bitterly for the* repeated *Denial of Jeſus*: Let us behold our Lord reproving us only with *a Look*, and forgiving our Fault as ſoon as he has put us in mind of it. And when we have thought of ſo much Goodneſs, we ſhall have no Occaſion to ask St. *Peter's* Queſtion, *Lord how often ſhall my Brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven Times?* But ſhall readily return our Saviour's Anſwer to it; *not unto Seven Times, but unto Seventy Times Seven.* *Matth* 18. 21, 22.

The Bleſſed Jeſus never fails to forgive us upon our Repentance; and therefore he juſtly requires us to forgive our Brother as often

often as he repents. *If thy Brother* (ſays he) *treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him; and if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven Times in a Day, and ſeven Times in a Day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent, thou ſhalt forgive him.*

Lu. 17. 3, 4

Seventy Times ſeven is a large Number; but our Forgiveneſs is not confin'd even to that Number; it ſerves rather to ſhew that it ought to be unlimited, and confin'd to no Number at all.

Wretched, irrecoverably wretched would be our Caſe, if God were to forgive us but *ſeventy Times ſeven Times*, and his Mercy ſhould ſay, *hitherto will I come, and no farther.*

Let us think with our ſelves how earneſtly we deſire Pardon, with what Fear and Anguiſh of Soul we cry unto him, *caſt us not away from thy Preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from us. O give us the Comfort of thy Help again, and ſtabliſh us with thy free Spirit.*

Pſalm 51. 11, 12.

Let us conſider that he does not ſpurn at, nor diſdainfully reject us; but kindly embraces the humble Penitents, *pours Oil into their Wounds, and binds up all their Sores.* With what Pity does he raiſe them up from the Duſt! How graciouſly does he comfort and refreſh their drooping Souls! With what Tenderneſs does he aſſwage their Sorrows, *be of good Cheer, your Sins are forgiven you!* How freely does he invite us all, *come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt!*

How

How Affectionately does he receive us at his Table! and how Great is his Joy, when we ſincerely partake of his Body and Blood!

May we learn to love our Brother as our Saviour loves us! May we ſtrive to forgive much, ſince we are forgiven infinitely more!

The

The Heinous Sin of an Unrighteous Witneſs.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Univerſity of Oxford,

At St. *MARY*'s,

At the Aſſizes Holden there by the Honourable Mr. Baron *PRICE*, and Mr. Juſtice *FORTESCUE*, *March* the Third, 1722.

EXOD. XXIII. 1.

Thou ſhalt not raiſe a falſe Report: Put not thine Hand with the Wicked, to be an Unrighteous Witneſs.

GOD, who *is Jealous of his Honour*, and has Commanded us to *Reverence his Holy Name*, is alſo careful to preſerve our Neighbour's Reputation,

and ſcreen it from the Reproaches of an Injurious Tongue: He guards it, *as the Apple of his Eye*, and has *plac'd a flaming Sword to keep it, as the Tree of Life.*

In the Firſt Table of the Law he has forbidden us to *Take his Name in vain*, and charg'd a Weight of Guilt upon the Impious Wretch that preſumes to Trifle with it. And in the Second Table, He has as poſitively forbidden the Violation of our Neighbour's Fame, and has deliver'd That eternal Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not bear Falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.*

And the Words of my Text *are like unto it*, and are an expreſs Declaration againſt every Kind of Injury, that can Affect our Brother's Reputation; from the Loweſt Degree of Miſchief, that is wrought by a careleſs Tongue, to the moſt conſummate Villany, that can proceed from a Falſe and Perjur'd Witneſs. It begins with thoſe ſlight Reports, that are *driven about by every Wind* of Vanity; and ends with thoſe pernicious Lies, that are utter'd with a Mock-Solemnity, in the Courts of Juſtice. And it condemns the Fooliſh Talkers, that Inconſiderately Blaſt the good Name of others; and *the Sons of Belial*, that *Stand againſt their Neighbour's Blood*, and ſwear Falſely for Hire againſt their Innocent Brother. Nor does it only condemn thoſe mercenary Accuſers, that give unrighteous Teſtimony; but thoſe alſo, that Abett and Encourage them, and lead them by indirect Practices into that accurſed Wickedneſs.

That I may consider the Words in the utmost Extent of their Signification, and may in some measure answer the Design of our Assembling in *This Holy Place*, I shall shew,

First, The Sin and Danger of *Raising a False Report.*
Secondly, The Heinous Guilt of being *an Unrighteous Witness.*
Thirdly, The several ways by which we are Accessary to the Crime, and Partake of its Guilt.
And, *Lastly*, Shall endeavour to Disswade you from Committing, or Promoting this Pernicious Wickedness.

And, *First*, I am to shew the Sin and Danger of *Raising a False Report.*

This Subject is so frequently Treated of, that it seems Needless to mention it: But the Sin is so frequently Practic'd, that it is necessary to speak earnestly against it.

We are guilty of this Sin, when we are either the Authors, or the Receivers of a False Report; and it may be justly imputed to us, whether we *make the Lie* our selves, *or love it*, when it is *made* by another: and the Channel, through which it is convey'd, is Polluted, as well as the Fountain from whence it flow'd.

This ought to be consider'd, but is seldom brought under Consideration. If we can but *wash our Hands from* the Guilt of Inventing

ing it, we boaſt of our Innocence, and grow confident upon it, though we fondly cheriſh the Calumny, and induſtriouſly ſpread the Poyſon.

This Sin is attended with different degrees of Malignity, according to the ſeveral Principles from which it riſes, and the ſeveral Ends to which it endeavours to attain. But it is without Excuſe, even in its beſt Appearance, and is liable to Condemnation, even when it is free from Malicious Deſigns. For a Good Name is of a Tender and Delicate Nature, that muſt not be raſhly violated by a Babbling Tongue. Every Man's Reaſon ſhews him the Injuſtice of this Proceeding; for a fair Reputation is Dear to every Man, and he is cut to the Heart by the ſlighteſt Injuries that *come near to hurt it:* It is therefore abſurd to ſay, *Are we not in Sport?* when we are careleſsly Wounding our Neighbour in ſo Tender a Part, and freely caſt thoſe Reflections upon him, that would ſo deeply affect our ſelves.

This indecent Liberty draws after it, a Train and Succeſſion of Evils: For a Falſe Report *takes to it ſelf Wings, and flies Abroad,* and is as ſwift in its Motion, *as the Flame that devoureth the Stubble.* An eaſy Credulity catches the Lie, as ſoon as it is utter'd, and delights to communicate the guilty Secret: it ſpreads beyond the reach of its Author, and can never be controll'd. The Tongue, that gave a Looſe to it, in vain endeavours to gather up the Reins: for the Cenſure can-

not be recall'd, neither can its Impreſſion ever be eras'd.

But though we could prevent theſe Pernicious Conſequences, and confine the Sin to our ſelves, yet it would be dangerous to indulge a Licentious Tongue, and ſpeak at all Adventures concerning our Neighbour. For it will daily render us more Regardleſs of his Reputation, and make a Lie ſo familiar with us, that we ſhall uſe it at length without Reſtraint, even upon more ſolemn Occaſions, and be Hardy enough to Swear Falſely, in Caſes of the greateſt Moment.

But whatever can be ſaid againſt thoſe groundleſs Reports, that are imprudently Rais'd, without any evil Deſign, is of much ſtronger Force againſt thoſe injurious Detractions and virulent Calumnies, that proceed from a wicked and malicious Intention. For if the Former produce more Evils than are intended; the Latter intend all the Evils that They can poſſibly produce.

Malice and Envy are Principles of ſo corrupt a Nature, that they muſt neceſſarily give a Tincture of Baſeneſs to every Thought, Word, and Action, that is Influenc'd by them. They are not only polluted with Evil, but are Evil it ſelf, being the very Eſſence and Torment of the Accurſed Spirit: All that He Does, and All that He Suffers, is deriv'd from them: They prey upon him with *an Unquenchable Fire*, and inceſſantly urge him to Accuſe and Calumniate the Children of Men, and *ſeek whom he may Deſtroy*

ſtroy by his Fatal Devices. What Streams of Bitterneſs then muſt flow from ſo Bitter a Fountain! How Baleful are thoſe Calumnies that take their Riſe from ſo malignant a Temper.

The Effects are as bad as the Cauſe: For they Rob our Innocent Neighbour of his moſt valuable Treaſure, a Treaſure dearer than Life: They defeat his Purpoſes of doing Good, and render all his Endeavours Ineffectual: They ruin his Family, and entail Poverty upon it.

How often are the faireſt Hopes and Expectations cut off, by an envious Surmize, and a malicious Inſinuation! How often is the extenſive Influence of Virtue blaſted by Detraction!

It is a great Aggravation of the Sin of Calumny, that it not only aims at perſonal Injuries; nor only endeavours to leſſen our Neighbour's Character; but *ſhoots forth its Poiſonous Arrows* againſt Innocence it ſelf, and delights to ſully even *the Beauty of Holineſs.*

An Inveterate Hatred to Religion ſtirs up wicked Men, to defame thoſe excellent Examples that are adorn'd with it: And they hope to impair the Value and Efficacy of Virtue, by vilifying thoſe that practice it; and becauſe they cannot Riſe to their glorious Height, they labour to bring them down to their infamous Level.

And if it be Sinful to Injure any Man, and much more to Injure him, becauſe he

is capable of doing Good; it is yet more Sinful to Injure a whole Order of Men, and to caſt unjuſt Aſperſions upon them, for the ſake of their Office, and Reproach them, becauſe they do their Duty, and watch for the immortal Souls of their Brethren.

But leaving this baſe Proceeding to be condemn'd by it ſelf, and ſink under the Weight of its own Wickedneſs; I proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew the Heinous Guilt of being *an Unrighteous Witneſs.*

It is our unalterable Duty, conſtantly to ſpeak the Truth, and never deviate from it, no, not in caſes of the ſmalleſt Moment. And Falſhood is always a Sin, whether it be ſpoken with, or without a malicious Intention. It therefore ought to be avoided in ordinary Converſation, and we ſhould never allow our ſelves in it, in any Place, or upon any Occaſion whatſoever. Many are the Injuries that ariſe from it, when it is concern'd only in the lighteſt Cenſures, and is convey'd in ſecret Whiſpers from one to another. But Infinitely more and greater are they, when the Inſolent Falſhood defies the Sight of the Sun, and pretends to the moſt ſacred Authority, even in the Courts of Judgment.

It is the Intent of divine and human Laws, that by the Mouth of Witneſſes, the Truth ſhould be eſtabliſh'd: But the giving unrighteous Teſtimony diſappoints this Intention, and perverts the Courſe of Juſtice.

The

The Meaſure of its Guilt is ſo Large and Extenſive, that it is difficult to ſurvey it in every Part, and take the exact Compaſs of it.

In its own ſimple Nature, it has the Guilt of a Lie. As it is given on purpoſe to do Miſchief, it is a Pernicious Lie. And being confirm'd by an Oath, this Pernicious Lie is aggravated with Perjury. If the Effect that is wrought by it, be the loſs of our Neighbour's Property or Reputation, it incurrs the Guilt of Theft, and is the worſt kind of Robbery. If it conduces to the taking away his Life, it riſes to the unnatural Sin of Murder. And this Murder is committed with ſuch flagrant Circumſtances, as *the Heart of Man* can hardly bear to *conceive*. For it is not committed accidentally, by the ſuddain Outrage of Paſſion, but Solemnly and Deliberately, by the abus'd Sword of Juſtice.

The Place in which falſe Teſtimony is given, adds a yet deeper Tincture to the Crime; for it is not only the Place in which the Majeſty of the King is ſuppos'd to be preſent, but in which alſo the Infinite Majeſty of God, is deſir'd to vouchſafe its eſpecial Preſence.

The Seat of Judgment, before which the falſe Witneſs appears, is an Emblem of that Dread Tribunal, at which every People and Nation muſt ſtand to receive their Doom. The Cauſe that is tried, is the Cauſe of God. The Trial repreſents his

ſearching Examination. The Perſons that adminiſter Juſtice, Act in his ſtead: And the Sentence which they Paſs, is an Earneſt of his final Sentence.

And yet in this ſolemn Place, before theſe venerable Miniſters, in Matters of the Laſt and moſt Important Concern, the Preſumptuous Villain denies the God of Truth, mocks at the God of Juſtice and Power, and calls down the God of Vengeance to bring all *the Terrors of his Wrath* upon him. And whilſt he is poſitively aſſerting a malicious Lie, he is not afraid to ſay, *the All-ſeeing God knoweth that I Lie not.*

The Advice of the Preacher, to him that is *going into the Houſe of God*, is Applicable to him that enters the Courts of Juſtice, which are alſo the Places of his Preſence:

Eccles. 5. 2. *Be not raſh with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be haſty to utter any Thing before God, for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth; Therefore* (I may add) *Let thy Words be* weigh'd with the exacteſt Care, and ſpoken with the ſtricteſt Regard to Truth.

The Queſtion that is put to the Witneſs, that appears for or againſt the ſuppos'd Criminal, may be properly expreſs'd in this Form; *I adjure thee by the Living God, that thou tell us, whether* the Accuſation be True or Falſe.

And his own Conſcience ſhould give him this Admonition, before he delivers his Teſtimony; *Hereafter ſhalt thou ſee the Son of*

Mat. 27. 64 *Man ſitting on the Right-hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* The

The Expectation of that dreadful Appearrance ſhould ſummon all his Thoughts, to conſider the Aggravations of an unrighteous Teſtimony.

It is Perjury to ſwear to a Thing which we do not Know to be True, becauſe we give the moſt ſacred Confirmation to a Thing that is Uncertain.

It is more Heinous Perjury to ſwear to a Thing which we know to be Falſe, becauſe we confirm a known Falſhood with *the Oath of God.* This is a ſacrilegious Abuſe of his holy Name, and the utmoſt Injury that can be done to Truth, becauſe we ſet the Seal of Truth to an Impious Falſhood. *God cannot Swear by a greater than himſelf*; neither can he give his eternal Truth a ſtronger Ratification, than his Oath.

And if Falſhood and Perjury can admit of any Aggravation, it muſt aggravate our Guilt, to ſwear Falſely for the Sake of a Reward; and aggravate it yet more, to to ſwear Falſely for the Sake of doing Miſchief. In the Former Caſe, we ſet our Neighbour's Property, Reputation and Life, and even our own precious Souls to Sale, to gratify our Avarice, or indulge our Luſts: and in the Latter, we make Juſtice an Inſtrument of our Revenge, and execute the Purpoſes of Malice, even before God's Tribunal. And whilſt we call for his Immediate Preſence, we *do Evil with an high hand*, and create a Neceſſity of ſhedding Innocent Blood.

For

For when our Neighbour's Life is depending upon our Evidence, if we give it poſitively againſt him, the moſt diſcerning Jury, and the moſt impartial Judge muſt be determin'd by it: and by whomſoever the fatal Verdict and Sentence are pronounc'd, yet the Guilt will lie for ever upon us, who are the unjuſt Occaſions of that Verdict and Sentence.

And the Injury that is done by an unrighteous Teſtimony, is deep and laſting; for it gains the Authority and Sanction of the Law, and derives its Force, even from the Seat of Judgment.

If there be any *Iniquity that ſhould be Puniſh'd by the Judges*, it is certainly the Iniquity of thoſe wicked Men, that *lie in wait for Blood*, *and ſpeak like the Piercings of a Sword.*

We cannot ſufficiently abhor thoſe Falſe Witneſſes, that endeavour to enſnare the Innocent, by *the Tranſgreſſion of their Lips*, and *lay up Deceit within them*, for the Deſtruction of their Neighbour.

Neither the Greateſt, nor the Beſt of Men, can be ſecure from the fatal Effects of their confident Perjury. No one, *but the Judge of all the Earth*, can diſappoint their malicious Endeavours, to render *The Righteous as the Wicked*, and bring them *under the ſame Condemnation.*

We may behold the entire Proceſs of their Iniquity, in the Methods that were taken to ſhed the Blood of *Naboth*. *The Elders and Nobles*

Nobles of the City, at the Command of Jezebel, ſet two Men, Sons of Belial, before him, and they Witneſs'd againſt him, even againſt Naboth, in the Preſence of the People, ſaying, Naboth did Blaſpheme God and the King. Then they carried him forth out of the City, and ſtoned him with Stones that he died. 1 *Kings* 21.

But I might have brought a later Inſtance of the like villainous Nature, if it had not been happily Defeated by the wonderful Providence of God. *The Springs* of Iniquity *were ſeen, and the Depths of Satan were diſcover'd,* in the cruel Devices that were Fram'd againſt a late Excellent Prelate of our Church. *The Snares of Death encompaſs'd him, and the crafty Wilineſs of Hell came about him.* But his own Maſterly Pen has ſo perfectly Deſcrib'd the exquiſite Villany, and the ſurprizing Means, by which *the Snare was broken, and he was deliver'd,* that I need not inſiſt any farther upon it, but proceed,

Thirdly, To ſhew the ſeveral Ways by which we are Acceſſary to the Crime, and Partake of the Guilt of *an Unrighteous Witneſs.*

And, *Firſt,* we are Acceſſary to the Crime, and Partake of its Guilt, if we Entice and Solicit others to *bear Falſe Witneſs.*

Secondly, If we endeavour to perplex and confound Ignorant Perſons, and fallaciouſly Enſnare them, while they are giving Evidence.

Thirdly, If we weaken and invalidate Full and Sufficient Teſtimony, or unjuſtly confirm

firm and ſtrengthen that which is Weak and Inſufficient.

Fourthly, If we give Credit and Authority to ſlight and imperfect Proof.

Fifthly, If we wickedly abett and encourage the Dregs and Refuſe of Men, in a Courſe of Perjury, and train them up in the School and Diſcipline of Falſhood.

Sixthly, If we make tempting Overtures to the Indigent and Neceſſitous, in order to obtain a lying Confeſſion from their mercenary Tongues.

And *Laſtly*, If we try and torture the condemn'd Priſoners in their laſt Hour, to force and extort an unjuſt Accuſation from them, in the Extremity of their Diſtreſs.

And *Firſt*, We are acceſſary to the Crime, and partake of its Guilt, if we entice and ſollicit others to *bear Falſe Witneſs*.

To entice and lead Men to Sin, is the Buſineſs of the Devil; and to encourage them to do Miſchief, is his wicked Delight. And if we invite and perſwade our Brethren, to walk in the Paths of Sin, we are ſubſervient to his malicious Deſigns, and are the Miniſters of *the great Deſtroyer*. And if we tempt them to be falſe Accuſers, and to give deceitful Evidence againſt their Neighbour, we teach them to imitate that accurſed Spirit in his favourite Wickedneſs, and to reſemble him in his diſtinguiſhing Character, which is, *a Falſe Accuſer*.

This deteſtable Practice, not only renders us Partakers of the Guilt, but almoſt engroſſes

groſſes and appropriates it to our ſelves; for we are the Authors of the Sin, they are but the Inſtruments of it; and we are not only the Authors of the Sin, but alſo of the Injury that is done by it; and are anſwerable both for the unrighteous Teſtimony, and the evil Effects that proceed from it.

And we are involv'd in deeper Guilt, if we firſt ſuggeſted the Thought, and kindled the Inclination to bear Falſe Witneſs; if we labour'd to overcome their Reluctance and Averſion; if we artfully perſwaded, or ſtrongly urg'd, or vehemently importun'd them to it; if we taught them the Leſſon of Falſhood, and inſtructed them in the Methods of Deceiving.

Each of theſe Circumſtances will enflame our Wickedneſs, and *lay up more Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.*

Secondly, We are acceſſary to the Crime, and partake of its Guilt, if we endeavour to perplex and confound ignorant Perſons, and fallaciouſly enſnare them while they are giving Evidence.

Curſed is he that maketh the Blind to go out of his Way. Deu. 27. 18 And this inhuman Practice may be juſtly charg'd upon thoſe ſubtle Men, that abuſe and miſlead the Simplicity of the Witneſſes, and beſet them with Snares and Occaſions of Falling.

When the Weak and Ignorant come into the Courts of Juſtice, their Minds are diſorder'd by the ſolemn Appearance, and can hardly deliver the Teſtimony that is requir'd

of

of them. And it is baſe and diſingenuous to heighten this Diſorder, and add to their Perplexity, that we may put Words into their Mouths, contrary to their real Sentiments, and make them ſubſervient to our corrupt Deſigns. For we engage them in a falſe Oath, though they intend to ſwear nothing but the Truth; and force them to ſpeak our Senſe, while they ſeem to be ſpeaking their own.

How excuſable ſoever this may appear in a Client's Defence; and how frequently and familiarly ſoever it is practic'd; yet I cannot but think it an Heinous Crime, to trifle with the Conſciences of Men, and *take our Paſtime* in a ludicrous Abuſe of their Teſtimony, in Caſes of the greateſt Moment.

Thirdly, We are Partakers of the Guilt of a Falſe Witneſs, if we weaken and invalidate full and ſufficient Teſtimony, or unjuſtly confirm and ſtrengthen that which is weak and inſufficient.

If we abate the Force of a juſt Evidence, we render it incapable of clearing the Innocent, or convicting the Guilty; and either enable the latter to Eſcape, or deprive the former of his neceſſary Defence.

And if we endeavour to conceal the Flaws and Failures of a weak and inſufficient Teſtimony, and add a ſtronger Force to it than it has in it ſelf, we alſo abett the Guilty, and ſcreen and protect him in his Wickedneſs; and wound the Innocent by the falſe Edge, that we have ſet upon a feeble and precarious Evidence.

And

And whether we make a Bad Title, Good, or a Good one, Bad, we are baſe and injurious; and deſerve to inherit that dreadful Woe, that is denounc'd againſt thoſe *that call Evil, Good; and Good, Evil.*

And *Fourthly*, We are alſo involv'd in this Guilt, if we give Credit and Authority to ſlight and imperfect Proof. For we extend it farther than the Caſe will bear, and ſtrain it beyond its Intent and Meaning.

It is abſurd in common Reaſoning, to aſſert more in the Concluſion, than can be drawn from the Premiſſes: And it is a groſſer Abſurdity to proceed in this manner, in the important Affairs of Juſtice.

We cannot act with too tender a Care, when our Neighbour's Property, Reputation, or Life is concern'd; and we offer a barbarous Indignity to human Nature, if we raſhly violate its deareſt Intereſts, and determine againſt them, upon doubtful and uncertain Proofs, or give entire Credit to a ſingle Witneſs, where Two at leaſt are requir'd by the Laws of God and Man.

This is not a private Injury, for it affects a whole Community; and though it falls immediately upon one, is a dangerous Precedent to all.

And the uſing extraordinary Meaſures to make up the Defect of Proof, and carry the Law beyond its juſt Extent, is certainly acting againſt Law, and according to its different Effects, commences either Robbery or Murder.

But

But *Fifthly*, We are farther Guilty, if we wickedly abett and encourage the Dregs and Refuſe of Men, in a Courſe of Perjury, and train them up in the School and Diſcipline of Falſhood.

Malice and Revenge are ſuch ſtrong Incentives to baſe and mercileſs Actions, that thoſe Evil Men that are poſſeſs'd and actuated by them, care not what Means they uſe, to accompliſh their unnatural Deſigns; and ſcruple not to plunge themſelves into any Depth of Iniquity, provided it will procure the Deſtruction of their Enemy.

Hence it is, that they employ the moſt profligate Wretches, and abandon'd Proſtitutes, in their infamous Service, and rake up the Filth and Off-ſcouring of the Nurſeries of Lewdneſs, to be the Inſtruments of their intended Villany.

And hence it is, that they dictate Falſhood to them, and prepare them to deliver the unrighteous Teſtimony, which they have labour'd to invent.

And many there are that readily perform their appointed Task, and confidently repeat the Leſſon that is inculcated to them, having renounc'd the Diſtinctions of Right and Wrong, and harden'd their Conſciences againſt all the Impreſſions of Religion and Humanity.

How Frail is the Tenure of human Life, if it may be blaſted in an Inſtant, by the corrupt Breath of the Worſt of Men! How Uncertain is all that is dear to us in this World,

World, if the brighteſt Ornaments of Church and State may be condemn'd to Die, upon the hir'd Teſtimony of thoſe Preſumptuous Witneſſes, that have no ſenſe of Shame, nor regard to their Word, nor the leaſt Remains of common Honeſty!

Sixthly, We are alſo Acceſſary to the Crime, if we make tempting Overtures to the Indigent and Neceſſitous, in order to obtain a lying Confeſſion from their Mercenary Tongues.

When extreme Poverty preſſes hard upon them, and their Wants cry aloud for a Supply, they are too much diſpos'd to take hold of any thing, that will preſently ſatisfy them, even though they are forc'd to give their Innocence in exchange for it.

And when their Neceſſities are the effect of their Vices, and their Luſts are Importunate with them for their uſual Nouriſhment, they will conſider no more than the means of their immediate Gratification, and will greedily embrace even the worſt Conditions of obtaining it. But Woe unto them that offer them thoſe Conditions!

The moſt neceſſitous Circumſtances will not Juſtify or Excuſe any wicked Action; but it will aggravate their Guilt, to ſupport one Sin by another: yet we are in a great Meaſure anſwerable for it, if we Apply a Temptation ſuitable to their Wants, and entice them to Falſhood by the Promiſe of a Reward. *Thus when the Watch came into the City, and ſhew'd unto the chief Prieſts all the*

things that were done at our Saviour's Sepulchre; They aſſembled with the Elders, and took Counſel, and gave Large Money to the Soldiers, ſaying, ſay ye, his Diſciples came by Night, and ſtole him away, while we ſlept. And if this come to the Governour's Ear, we will Perſwade
Matth. 28. *Him, and Secure You; ſo they took the Money, and did as they were taught.*

And the ſame Tempting Overtures have generally the ſame Effect: and there are frequent Inſtances of wretched Men, that *for Handfuls of Barley, and Pieces of Bread, will ſlay the Souls that ſhould not die, and ſave the Souls alive that ſhould not live: With Lies they make the Heart of the Righteous ſad, and*
Ezek. 13. *ſtrengthen the Hands of the Wicked.*

And we are *Partakers with them in their Sins*, if we make an indirect uſe of their Neceſſities, and give them Encouragement to ſwear Falſely.

And *Laſtly*, we are involv'd in yet deeper Guilt, if we try and torture the Condemn'd Priſoners in their laſt Hour, to force and extort an unjuſt Accuſation from them, in the Extremity of their Diſtreſs.

It is indeed a great and neceſſary Duty to exhort them, to make a ſincere and perfect Confeſſion of all their Crimes; to draw out their ſecret Wickedneſs from the Bottom of their Hearts, and leave no Reſerve of Iniquity in their Boſom.

But it is by no means a Duty: It is certainly the worſt of Sins, to endeavour to corrupt them, while they have but a few Hours

Hours to Live; to rob them of that precious Time, that ſhould be devoted only to God; to *ſtand like Satan at their Right-hand*, urging and importuning them to enter into Counſels of Blood and Cruelty, and to ſeal their own Damnation, by Swearing away the Life of the Innocent.

This has the exacteſt Reſemblance of the Prince of Darkneſs, who exerts his whole Policy and Strength, and makes his utmoſt Efforts, in our laſt Hour, to accompliſh our Eternal Deſtruction.

How Miſerable is the Condition of thoſe Men that are held in an anxious Suſpenſe, between the Hopes of Life, and the Terrors of Death, and are inceſſantly prompted to avoid the one, and obtain the other, by giving an unrighteous Teſtimony!

What will not a wicked Man do to ſcreen himſelf from the dreadful Proſpect of Eternity? What will he not do, to purchaſe a longer Continuance in that *Life, in which only he has Hope?* Whoſe Life will he value, in Compariſon of his own? Whom will he not deliver up to Death, that he himſelf may Eſcape from it? Who then can be ſafe, if the Guilty are ſollicited from Day to Day, to Accuſe the Innocent?

But it is almoſt unnatural to ſuppoſe the Poſſibility of ſo vile a Proceeding: It is ſhocking to Humanity, barely to mention it.

Let *no ſuch Deed be done, or ſeen*, in our Days: Let it not be once attempted in any Chriſtian Country: Let it not be done *even*

in Gath, or mention'd *in the Streets of Aſhkelon:* Let not the Eye ſee, nor the Ear hear, nor the Heart of Man conceive ſo Black a Villany.

Having ſhewn the Heinous Guilt of being an unrighteous Witneſs, and the ſeveral Ways by which we are acceſſary to it; I ſhall now endeavour to Diſſwade you from Committing, or Promoting this Pernicious Wickedneſs.

But I hope that your own Conſciences will render it unneceſſary to dwell very long upon it; and that the Baſeneſs of the Crime has already poſſeſs'd you with an entire Abhorrence of it. But if there be any thing farther neceſſary; Let me intreat you to retain a conſtant Value for Truth and Sincerity, and ſuffer no Temptation in the World, to come in Competition with it.

When you are call'd upon, to give your Teſtimony, in the Courts of Juſtice, Let not any Prejudice prevail with you to ſwear Falſely againſt any Man; but Remember that he is your Brother, your Country-man, your Fellow-Chriſtian.

Conſider the Law of Equity, and the Reaſonableneſs of *Doing, as you deſire it ſhould be Done unto you*; and therefore let your Neighbour's Reputation, be as dear to you, as your own, his Property, as your Property, and his Life, as your Life.

Think of the Confidence that is put in your Veracity, and the great and important Affairs that depend upon it: and do not

not baſely abuſe that Confidence, nor forfeit the Credit of that Veracity.

Look forward to the certain Conſequences of Falſhood; and aſſure your ſelves, that the Lord the Righteous Witneſs will dreadfully puniſh it. How will you be able to contend with him in that Terrible Day, when the Falſe Accuſers will be *ſet in the Fore-Front of the hotteſt Battle?* What will you plead for your ſelves, when Satan ſhall Produce your unrighteous Teſtimony againſt you; and your Sins ſhall accuſe you to your Face, before the great Tribunal?

Let me exhort you, that are appointed to weigh and examine the Evidence, to conſider it throughly before you ſpeak your Opinion.

Let not any Favour or Hatred biaſs and determine you againſt the Truth; but have a ſtrict and unalterable Regard to the Nature and Strength of the Teſtimony. And when you deliver your Verdict to the Judges, Let it be, *as the Oracles of God.*

And give me Leave, My Lords, barely to mention your Duty, or rather, to enforce my Exhortations with your Example.

Let me conclude, that you have always remembred whoſe Repreſentatives you are; and have delighted to imitate him, in his glorious Attributes of Juſtice and Mercy.

May you inviolably preſerve the Sacred Truſt, and never depart *one Jot or Tittle,* from Truth and Faithfulneſs.

May you be always *favourable to the Sim-*

ple and Needy, and preſerve the Souls of the Poor: may you deliver them from Falſhood, and Wrong; and may their Blood be dear in your Sight.

And may I deſcribe your Practice, and your Reward, in the Words of God, by the Prophet *Iſaiah*. *He that walketh Righteouſly and ſpeaketh Uprightly, He that deſpiſeth the the Gain of Oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and ſhutteth his Eyes from ſeeing Evil: He ſhall dwell on high, his Place of Defence, ſhall be the Munitions of Rocks, Bread ſhall be given him, his Waters ſhall be ſure.*

Iſa. 33. 15, 16.

May your conſtant Behaviour entirely anſwer this excellent Character; and may you enjoy the Fulneſs of this Reward.

And when *the Gates of Heaven, and the Everlaſting Doors are open'd to receive the King of Glory*, at his return from Judgment; may you *aſcend with him into the Hill of the Lord, and ſtand for ever in his holy Place.*

Pſal. 24.

GOD

GOD the Author and Giver of all our Faculties.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. *MARY*'s.

EXOD. IV. 11.

And the Lord ſaid unto him, who hath made Man's Mouth? Or who maketh the Dumb, or Deaf, or the Seeing, or the Blind? Have not I the Lord?

GOD hath choſen the fooliſh Things of the World, to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things which are

1 Cor. 1. 27, 28. *mighty; and baſe Things of the World, and Things which are deſpis'd, hath God choſen, yea and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are.* For *the Strength of God is* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *made perfect in the Weakneſs* of Man, and the *Infirmities* of our Nature ſhew forth *the Power of Chriſt.*

This was confirm'd by a wonderful Inſtance, when the All-wiſe and Almighty God was pleas'd to make choice of *Moſes*, to be his Embaſſador to the Court of *Pharaoh*, and the Deliverer of his People *Iſrael*, from *Egyptian* Bondage. *He choſe* Moſes *his Servant, and took him from the Sheepfolds, from following the Ews great with Young, he brought him to feed* Pſ 78. 71, 72. Jacob *his People, and* Iſrael *his Inheritance.*

The good Shepherd greatly ſurpriz'd with the unexpected Charge, modeſtly and humbly ſaid unto God, *Who am I, that I ſhould* Ex. 3. 11. *go unto* Pharoah, *and that I ſhould bring forth the Children of* Iſrael *out of* Egypt. And tho' God vouchſafed to promiſe that he would v. 12. *be with him*, and ſupport him with his eſpecial Preſence; yet he ſtill declin'd the Employment that ſeem'd too high and difficult for him; and ſtill diſtruſted his own Abilities, and offer'd this Excuſe to God, *O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor ſince* Ex. 4. 10. *thou haſt ſpoken with thy Servant; but I am ſlow of Speech, and of a ſlow Tongue.*

But God was ſo far from accepting this Excuſe, that he immediately over-rul'd it with this powerful Reaſoning, *Who hath made Man's Mouth? Or who maketh the Dumb, or Deaf,*

Deaf, or the Seeing or the Blind? Have not I the Lord? Which may be render'd to this Effect. Conſider whoſe Power you receive, and by whom you are entruſted with this great Charge, Is not the Mouth the Work of my Fingers? And did not every Word in the Tongue proceed from me? Did not I at firſt create all the Faculties of Man? And does not the Uſe and Exerciſe of them ſtill depend upon me? Is any one endued with theſe Gifts without my Bounty? Or is any one depriv'd of them by any other Power but mine? Did I produce theſe Things? And cannot I produce greater Things than theſe? Cannot I direct them to my appointted Ends? And cannot I execute my Work without them? Cannot I ſupply any Defect, or make that Defect an Inſtrument of my Glory? Cannot I make the *Slow of Speech Eloquent*, and proclaim my Praiſes by the Voice of the Dumb? Cannot I give Light to thoſe that were born in Darkneſs, and *unſtop the Ears of the Deaf?* Doubt not there- *Iſ.* 35. 5.
fore, but with Faith depend on my Aſſiſtance. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, I* *Pſ.* 8. 2.
have ordain'd Strength, to ſtill the Enemy and the Avenger: My Spirit ſhall hereafter enable Twelve illiterate Jews *to ſpeak the wonderful* *Acts* 2. 11.
Works of God, in the Language of every People under Heaven; and thou alſo, how Unequal ſoever thou ſeemeſt to this important Work, how Slow ſoever thou art of Speech, ſhalt yet be *mighty in Words and* *Acts* 7. 22.
Deeds; neither ſhall all the Wiſdom and Power

Power of Egypt *be able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit*, wherewith I will enable thee to *ſpeak*.

From the Words thus conſider'd, with reſpect to the Occaſion and Deſign of them, we may proceed more largely to conſider,

Firſt, That God is the Author and Giver of all our Faculties and Powers.

Secondly, That the Defect and Want of them proceeds alſo from him.

Thirdly, That he can ſupply their Defect even in this Life. And

Fourthly, That he will abundantly repair and recompence it in the Life to come.

And *Firſt*, We are to conſider, that God is the Author and Giver of all our Faculties and Powers.

This indeed is imply'd in the general Notion of our Creation; and we cannot but know, that he who gave us our Being, alſo gave us every thing that conduces to our Welfare and Happineſs; and he that compos'd our whole Frame, did alſo make the ſeveral Parts that are compos'd in ſuch wonderful Order. But our Minds are too narrow, to entertain at once a juſt and entire Conception of the whole: The Subject is too large to be comprehended in one View; and the Debt of Gratitude ariſing from it, is ſo immenſe a Sum, that it ſurprizes and over-powers us. We may therefore more eaſily conſider it by Parts, and take a diſtinct Notice of our ſeveral Faculties. But even then

then the Task would grow upon us, if we ſurvey'd our ſelves within as well as without, and endeavour'd to behold our Creator building the inward Chambers of the Mind, and the dark Encloſures of the Heart, ſtretching out the capacious Province of the Thoughts, laying the ſure and laſting Foundations of the Memory, and raiſing the curious Scenes of the Imagination. This glorious Work cannot be perfectly deſcrib'd by any one, but him that made it. He prepar'd the Heart for his Dwelling-place; and he alone is throughly acquainted with the artful Contrivance, and beautiful Furniture of his own Habitation; it is enough for us to ſurvey our outward Faculties, and dwell chiefly upon thoſe that are contain'd in the Text, the Faculties of the Tongue, the Eye, and the Ear.

That Divine Perſon that appear'd to *Moſes*, was the Angel of the New Covenant, The Ever Bleſſed Jeſus, The True and Eternal God; it was he that made the Worlds, and upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power; it was *he that ſtretch'd forth the Heavens, and ſpread abroad the Earth, and form'd Man from the Womb*; and it was he that endued us with the ſpeaking Tongue, *the ſeeing Eye, and the hearing Ear.* *Iſ.* 44. 24. *Pr.* 20. 12.

When poor helpleſs Man comes forth into a wretched World, a feeble, tender Infant; he enables him only to ſignify and diſcover his Wants, and call for Redreſs by Sounds of Wailing, and the Cries of Complaint: he

he himſelf knows not the meaning of his own Voice; and his affectionate Parents, can gueſs but uncertainly at the Cauſes of his Cry. The Gift of Speech is as yet like a Talent bury'd in the Earth, and the Tongue is as yet too weak to exert it. Our wiſe Creator ſuffers Man to lie for a Time, in this impotent State, that he may grow up as a tender Plant, under the watchful Care of his Parents, and in an abſolute Dependance upon Him, our common Father; and whenſoever he has attain'd to Manly Strength, and the perfect Uſe of his Faculties, he may check his Pride and Preſumption, with the Remembrance of his former Weakneſs.

But the Infant does not long continue in this feeble Condition, his Strength is gradually confirm'd, and his Bands and Sinews are render'd fit for the Uſes of Life; his Reaſon that was at firſt impriſon'd, and conceal'd under the Veil of Fleſh, begins to caſt forth a glimmering Light; and the Shadows of the Morning paſs away, and then his Tongue labours to improve it ſelf, and with Difficulty brings forth broken Words, and Efforts of Speech; and he that made the Mouth, guides and directs its Motions, and educates and trains it up, till it *ceaſes to ſpeak of childiſh Things*, and is capable of anſwering the Ends for which it was ordain'd; and that once artleſs Voice, which could only complain, without telling the Cauſes of its Complaint, which in Proceſs of Time could only endeavour to ſpeak, and frame broken,

diſ-

diſ-jointed Words, is now enabled, by God's Aſſiſtance, to reaſon and diſcourſe, to communicate the Thoughts and Pleaſures of the Mind, or to impart and leſſen its Sorrows; to ask for Help and Counſel, or give to thoſe that want it: With this glorious Faculty Man is qualify'd to do a World of Good; tho' it too often is a *World of Evil.* With this excellent Talent, he may diſplay all the Powers of Reaſon, and may with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, proclaim the Honour of God that gave it; and with this he maintains a neceſſary and delightful Intercourſe and Correſpondence, with the Members of human Society, and bears a Part in that peaceful Harmony, which ſupports and preſerves it. We cannot dwell too long upon this uſeful Faculty, ſince every Word in our Tongue, is a Subject that deſerves our Admiration; and it is capable of extending to all the Languages in the World, and of giving a Name to every Creature.

He that form'd the Tongue ſtill controlls it with his Power, and *turns it whitherſoever he will: While the People of the Earth was one, and they had all one Language,* they join'd in an impious Confederacy againſt Heaven, and proudly rebel'd againſt the Lord their Maker. But he immediately blaſted their vain Preſumption, by *dividing their Tongues,* and rendering every Man *a Stranger* and *a Barbarian* to his *Brother.* But even this fatal Curſe made the Tongue a greater Inſtrument of his Glory, and the Differences of Language, *Gen.* 11.6.

ſeverally

ſeverally bore a Part in a grateful Conſort to his Praiſe. Our Heavenly Father diſpens'd the Bleſſings of his Grace, by the very Means that he had us'd for their Puniſhment; and the Diviſion of Languages prepar'd the Way for the miraculous Gifts of Tongues. He addreſs'd himſelf as eaſily to the ſcatter'd Branches of his Family, the World, as if they had ſtill been one People: and publiſh'd his Goſpel in the different Speech of every Nation.

He that made the Mouth, and qualify'd it for all the Offices of Speech, was alſo the Creator of the Eye, and gave us the Bleſſing of Sight. The Frame and Situation of the Eye, were there no other Proof of the Being of a God, would ſufficiently prove and demonſtrate his Being. Infidelity it ſelf has been vanquiſh'd by a cloſe Survey of this noble Faculty; and inſtead of admiring its vain Cavils and Objections, has been conſtrain'd to admire and glorify the All-wiſe Creator.

The Eye is ſo advantageouſly plac'd, that it commands a large and comprehenſive View, and ſo far reſembles *the Eyes of the Lord, that are in every Place, and run to and fro in the Earth*, that it eaſily turns it ſelf every Way, looking upwards to *Heaven, that is the Throne of God*, or downwards to *the Earth, that is his Footſtool*, or round about that capacious Circle, which the Finger of God has drawn to encompaſs us on every Side. And the Pupil of the Eye is capable of enlarging or con-

Pr. 15. 3. Zech. 4. 10

Matth 5. 34, 35.

contracting it ſelf, that it may receive a juſt Meaſure of Light, and may not be oppreſs'd with too great a Multitude of Objects.

The Seat of the Eye is a ſtrong and ſubſtantial Defence to that tender and delicate Part; and to ſecure it from ſudden and ſurprizing Injuries, it is cover'd with ſeveral Coats of the moſt curious Frame and Texture, and has a Curtain drawn before it to be let down, or lifted up, as Occaſion requires. For the quicker Perception of Objects, it is made of ſo tender and ſenſible a Subſtance, and to guard it from the Approaches of Evil, it is endued with the earlieſt Apprehenſions of Danger, and haſtens to ſecure it ſelf, at the firſt Notice of it: And for its ſurer Safety, our affectionate Father has engag'd our ſtricteſt Care in its Defence, and made it ſo dear to us, that the Object of our moſt fervent Love cannot be dearer to us than *the Apple of our Eye.*

The Skins through which the Light is convey'd, are clear and tranſparent, that it may obtain an eaſy Paſſage into the inmoſt Rooms or Cells of the Eye, and may be turn'd into the beautiful Variety of Images that entertain the Sight.

Light is truly pleaſing in its own natural Simplicity, and is the Ornament and Glory of every other Object. But the Eye receives it with a freſh, and always-increaſing Pleaſure, as it is varied and diverſify'd by the different Ways of Reflexion, and puts on ſo many Sorts of Colours, like ſeveral *Changes of Raiment.*

Every

Every Time that the Eye opens and expands it ſelf, it draws as it were the whole viſible World into its narrow Compaſs; and there is a new Creation within it ſelf. *The Sun, that marvellous Inſtrument of the moſt High, the Moon, that ſhineth in the Firmament of Heaven, the Stars, that numberleſs Hoſt, the Rainbow, that glorious Circle which is bent by the Hands of the moſt High*; the Virgin Purity, and unſullied Whiteneſs of the Snow, the beautiful Embroidery of Flowers, the rich Cloathing of the Meadows, and *the Cattle upon a Thouſand Hills*, are preſented to the Eye by the Lord our Maker, and ſet before it, as on a ſpacious Theatre.

It is very obſervable, that tho' ſeveral Nerves miniſter to the Sight, and both the Eyes are employ'd, yet the Objects are not doubled or multiply'd, but appear ſingly, as they are. All the Nerves centre in one Point, and both the Eyes are helpful to each other, and behold their Object as if they were but one.

That great Light, that ſhews every thing to the Eye, caſts forth ſo bright and dazling a Luſtre, that it would bear too hard upon it, and injure our mortal Faculty, by the Beams of its Majeſty, if it were plac'd near to the Sight; and therefore our gracious Creator has fix'd it at a remote Diſtance from us, that we may look upon it with Pleaſure, and enjoy its milder Glory.

When the Eye is wearied with its daily Service, and the Night ſpreads a Veil of Darkneſs

Darkneſs over this lower World; the Curtain, that is hung before the Eye, falls down, being inclin'd by the Weight of Sleep, and the Eye-lids are *ſhut with a cloſe Seal*, till we have renew'd our Strength, and the Morning reſtores the World to our View. The Screen that covers the Eye, till the Light ariſes, not only affords it neceſſary Refreſhment, but defends it from the ſecret and inviſible Perils and Dangers of the Night.

And when the Day breaks, it does not ſhine forth at once in its full Perfection, but gradually manifeſts it ſelf, that the Eye may not be over-power'd, by a ſudden iſſuing out, and too mighty a Stream of Light. The Sun ſends a Harbinger before him, to give notice of his Appearance; and when the Dawning of the Day has prepar'd us to receive him, *he comes forth like a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, cloath'd with Light as with a Garment.* *Pſ.* 19. 5.

Though every Colour has a peculiar Beauty, yet they are not all equally agreeable and refreſhing to the Eye; but the Verdure of the Fields is moſt particularly pleaſing to it, and we can bear to dwell the longeſt upon it: And therefore God has choſen this for the common Dreſs of Nature, and made this Colour moſt familiar with our Sight. *He leads us through the green Paſtures*; and adorns the Herbs and Plants with many Varieties even in the ſame Colour, and changes it every Day.

The Time would fail me, ſhould I attempt to ſpeak of all the Pleaſures and Advantages of Sight; yet I cannot but obſerve, that the Eyes are a faithful Guard to the whole Man, and are plac'd in a Watch-tower, to diſcern his Danger, and give him friendly Warning while it is yet afar off.

And I may yet farther obſerve, that the Eye is very Inſtrumental in promoting the Happineſs of Converſation. It is the Eye that meets our Friend with a lively ſparkling Joy; and kindles and imparts the Heavenly Flame of Friendſhip. It is the Eye that often ſpeaks more powerfully than the Tongue, and is a true Interpreter of the Thoughts. It is the Eye that pities and ſpares, and (if I may ſo ſpeak) yerns over the miſerable Object with the moſt generous Compaſſion; and to ſay no more on this delightful Subject, It was with the Eye that our Bleſſed Saviour reprov'd St. *Peter* for his repeated Denial of him; and ſuch was the Force of this ſilent, but piercing Rebuke, that the Apoſtle was melted by it into Tears of Repentance, and *Matth.* 26. 75 *went out and wept bitterly. O Lord, How marvellous are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt thou* *Pſ.* 104. 24 *made them all!*

The Eye that ſees, give witneſs to thee; and the Ear that hears, confirms its Teſtimony. The Structure and Fabrick of the Ear was the Work of an Almighty Arm, and bears the undeniable Tokens of infinite Wiſdom. The outward Part of the Ear, that is moſt expos'd to Aſſaults, is of a firm and

and ſolid Nature, to defend it ſelf. The Paſſages from this outward Gate are dark and intricate, and turn and wind about, ſo as to prevent the Entrance of any Thing that may obſtruct the Hearing, and to ſecure the inward Parts from the ſudden Invaſion of rough and diſagreeable Sounds: And the Sounds that are brought *upon the Wings of the Wind*, are convey'd thro' many ſecret Arches and Caverns, that break the violence of their Noiſe, and ſoften and improve them in their Paſſage, that they may ſtrike agreeably upon the Ear.

Such is the Power of this excellent Faculty, that it enables us to converſe with Voices that are diſtant from us, and calls them home to it ſelf; and it alſo qualifies us to enjoy the Benefits of Privacy, and conducts the ſecret Whiſpers of our Friends into our Boſom. The Ear is alſo helpful to the Tongue, giving us our firſt Notions of Words, and teaching our Infant-Speech to frame them, by frequent Attention, and ſtudious Imitation. Without the Aſſiſtance of this Faculty, we ſhould be always ignorant of the Signification of Words, and entirely loſe the Diſtinction of Sounds.

By the Ear we maintain a neceſſary Part in the Converſation of the World, and partake with our Brethren, in the Pleaſures and Advantages of Society. By the Ear we hear the glad Tydings of the Goſpel, which *many Prophets and Kings have deſir'd to hear*, and which the Multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt *Lu.* 10. 24.

delighted to proclaim. And by the Ear we ſhall hear the Trumpet ſound, to call the Dead to Life.

Thus the ſeveral Faculties of the Tongue, the Eye, and the Ear, have the Characters of the divine Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs ſtamp'd upon them; and we cannot enjoy the free and perfect Exerciſe of theſe Faculties, without lifting up our Eyes to adore our Maker, our Tongue to glorify him, and our Ear to give attention to his Praiſe.

But if the Enjoyment of theſe Bleſſings does not make a juſt Impreſſion upon us, we may conſider,

Secondly, That the Defect and Want of them proceeds alſo from God.

If all Men were endued with theſe Faculties in the ſame Degree and Perfection, the perverſe Infidel would rather aſcribe them to the Neceſſity of Nature, than to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Creator. And if they continued to enjoy them without Alteration and Decay, they would be prone to forget their Dependance upon God, and preſume too much upon the Fulneſs of their Strength. But *the Potter*, to ſhew his *Power over the Clay, hath of the ſame Lump, made one Veſſel to honour, and another unto diſhonour*; and it is ſometimes his Pleaſure, that thoſe Veſſels ſhould afterwards be *marr'd* and impair'd, which were at firſt exactly wrought by his Almighty Hand.

Ro. 9. 21.

There are ſome, ſeemingly unhappy Creatures, whoſe Eyes were ſeal'd up in Darkneſs from

from the very Womb, and whoſe Eye-lids never let in the chearful Light of the Sun. That glorious Lamp of God *ariſeth and goeth down, and haſteth to the Place where he roſe. One Seaſon paſſeth away and another cometh.* Ec. 1. 4, 5. But the different Beauties of the Seaſons afford them no Change or Variety. *The Light is no Light to them; the Day is not clearer than the Night; the Darkneſs and Light to them are both alike.* But yet there is no juſt Occaſion for that Queſtion of the Diſciples, *Who did ſin, theſe Men, or their Parents, that they were born Blind?* Our Saviour's Anſwer ſhould put an effectual Stop to ſuch Enquiries; *Neither have theſe Men ſinn'd, nor their Parents, but that the Works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in them.* John 9. 2.

Others there are, that labour under the confederate Misfortunes of being Deaf and Dumb. Their Ears never heard the Reports of Sound; the Voices of their Brethren always knock'd at the Gate of their Ear in vain. There is no Speech nor Language to them; they diſtinguiſh not between the gentleſt Whiſper, and the loudeſt Thunder, but ſtand unmov'd, even at that mighty Noiſe, at which *the Earth trembles, and the Depths are troubled.* Pſ 77. 16.

And their Tongues being depriv'd of the neceſſary Inſtruction of the Ear, are unable to frame the Words which they never heard, and how big ſoever their Conceptions are, how great ſoever is the *Fire* that is *kindled* within them, by an impatient Eagerneſs and

Longing to expreſs their Thoughts, yet after all their ſtriving to bring them forth, they cannot even *at the laſt, ſpeak with their Tongue.*

But yet the Purpoſes of infinite Wiſdom are anſwer'd, by depriving them of the Benefits of Hearing and Speech; and God will be abundantly juſtify'd, even in theſe, leſs perfect Creatures.

And he alſo manifeſts his Power, even in thoſe that are furniſh'd with theſe Gifts, and ſhews, that the Continuance and Enjoyment of them depends entirely upon him.

The Tongue that is withheld from Speaking, during the Weakneſs of Infancy, returns again to his feeble State, when the Infirmities of old Age creep upon it: It loſes its vigorous manly Voice, performs its daily Task with Trembling and Heſitation, and *ſpeaketh Low, whiſpering* as it were *out of the Duſt of Death.*

The lively chearful Eye fades in the Evening of Life; its quick Diſcernment is turn'd into a doubtful Twilight, and a Miſt ariſes before it.

And the Strokes of Sound beat but faintly upon the Ear; the wearied Nerves can hardly diſcharge their Office; the Inſtruments of Muſick are unable to charm the languiſhing Faculty; the Voice of the neareſt Friends ſeems to be no more than the faultering Reports of a diſtant Echo; and the yet Living Man is debarr'd from the Pleaſures of Converſation, as if he were already in the Land of Silence.

But

But we need not have recourſe to the Weakneſs of Age, to ſhew the uncertain Continuance, and the certain Decay of theſe Faculties.

How often is the moſt abundant Fluency of Speech, and the nobleſt Eloquence of the Tongue, arreſted in the Midſt of its Courſe, and while it is yet ſpeaking, reſtrain'd from ſpeaking any more!

How often is the piercing Eye blaſted in the Exerciſe of its Power, and ſnatch'd from perfect Day into Midnight Darkneſs! How often is the Parent of Humours deſtructive to it ſelf! How often does it ſtain its own Light, and bring a fatal Spot upon it, an Eclipſe that cannot be with-drawn!

And how often is the Ear ſtrain'd and violated, even by thoſe Sounds which it delights to hear! How often is it charg'd with Obſtructions that cannot be remov'd! How often are the Impreſſions of the Voice blotted out and defac'd!

And God's Glory is no leſs diſplay'd by taking away, than by giving theſe Faculties to Men.

Till the Prediction of the Angel is fulfill'd in the Birth of St. *John* the Baptiſt, his Father *is dumb, and not able to ſpeak, becauſe he believ'd not the Angel's Words, which ſhould be fulfill'd in their Seaſon.* Lu. 1. 20.

But when the Child was born, and his Name given him, according to divine Appointment, his Father's *Mouth was open'd immediately, and his Tongue loos'd, and he ſpake and prais'd God.* Lu. 1. 64.

As the Goodneſs of God ſhone forth in this wonderful Inſtance; ſo his Juſtice no leſs appear'd in puniſhing *Elymas the Sorcerer* with Blindneſs, for *perverting the right Ways of the Lord. Now* (ſays the Apoſtle) *behold the Hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou ſhalt be Blind, not ſeeing the Sun for a certain Seaſon; and immediately there fell on him a Miſt and a Darkneſs, and he went about, ſeeking ſome to lead him by the Hand.*

Acts 13. 11

Theſe miraculous Inſtances (were there not a Thouſand others) would ſufficiently prove, that our Faculties are entirely in the Power of God; and whether we enjoy or are depriv'd of them, we may ſay with *Job*, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* We proceed

Job 1. 21.

Thirdly, To conſider, That he can ſupply their Defect even in this Life.

The Streams of the divine Bounty run in different Channels, and tho' they do not riſe to the ſame Height in every Channel, yet the Fountain never fails. The Abundance of one, makes up the Want of another; and every Inequality is either immediately adjuſted, or will at length be entirely remov'd.

All the Blemiſhes, and ſeeming Miſtakes of Nature, were order'd by the ſame infinite Wiſdom, as wrought and poliſh'd his more perfect Works with an unerring Hand. Both the one and the other are Inſtruments in the Hand that made them; and are equally capable of being directed and improv'd to the Glory of God; for his Service does not depend upon the Strength or Weakneſs of Men.

Stan-

Stammering Lips and Slowneſs of Speech, may execute the divine Commiſſion, as well as a Voice from Heaven; and *Moſes*, the Meekeſt of Men, notwithſtanding the Imperfections of his Tongue, is *as a God to Pharoah*; and with unaffected Simplicity, vanquiſhes all the Inchantments of *Egypt*. For the Almighty was *with the Mouth* of his Servant, *and taught him what he ſhould ſay*. *Exod.* 7 1. *Ex.* 4. 15.

When God has denied the Uſe of any Faculty to any of his Children, he has frequently ſupply'd the Want of it, by Gifts of a different Kind. If the Bodily Eye has loſt the Privilege of Sight, and never beheld the the Riches of the Earth, and the Glories of the Heavens; yet it has been happy, in loſing the dangerous View of thoſe bewitching Vanities that ſteal away the Heart; and whilſt the Mind has been ſhut up within it ſelf, and not permitted to wander thro' the diſtracting Variety of ſenſual Objects, it has more cloſely attended to its proper Buſineſs, and look'd more earneſtly on the other World with the Eye of Faith.

The Thoughts have afforded a ſufficient Recompence, for the outward Diſadvantages of the Eye, and there is *a Light ariſeth in the Darkneſs, that* enlivens the Soul, and *the Beams of Glory reſt upon this Tabernacle of God.*

In like Manner the Defects of the Ear, and the Tongue, are anſwer'd and ſupply'd by other Benefits, and they need not complain that they are uſeleſs to each other.

They

They are not acquainted with the rude Clamours, and impertinent Converſation of the World: And while there is nothing but Silence round about them, the Brain is enabled to perform a more perfect Work; to dig for the hidden Treaſures of Truth, to add to the Experience of former Ages, and enlarge the Number of curious Arts and Inventions. And it has been juſtly obſerv'd, that the exacteſt Lines, and the faireſt Reſemblances of Nature, have been drawn by the Hand of thoſe, whoſe Ear never heard a Voice, whoſe Tongue never ſpoke a Word. And Painting is an Art, in which the Deaf and the Dumb have wonderfully Excell'd. God has diſpens'd his Bleſſings with ſuch Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that there is generally Reaſon to Rejoyce, even where there ſeems to be Reaſon to Complain. And whilſt we pity our Brethren, for being in ſome reſpects leſs perfect; if we would attend a little, we ſhould alſo find occaſion to admire them, for being in other reſpects more perfect than our ſelves. They have often peculiar Advantages, as well as peculiar Defects; and the Misfortune of the one, is over-balanc'd by the Happineſs of the other. But were there more Inequality in this Life, yet the Goodneſs of God would be entirely Juſtified, becauſe,

Fourthly, He will abundantly repair and recompence it in the Life to come.

There the tender Infant, that is ſnatch'd away at the very Entrance of Life, and cut off before the Bloſſom has open'd itſelf, to enjoy

joy the Light of the Sun, will be born again in everlaſting Strength, and attain at once *to the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.* There the Strings of the Tongue, that were never loos'd, will be as the *Lute and Harp*, to ſound forth the Praiſes of God. There the glorious Army of the Holy Innocents will *Sing a new Song before the Throne, as with the Voice of many Waters, and as with the Voice of a great Thunder.* That Almighty Command, *Be Thou Open'd*, ſhall open every Mouth, and break the Bands of every Tongue, and enable them to ſpeak *Words that are as* yet *unſpeakable, which it is not Lawful as yet for a Man to utter.*

Eph. 4. 13.

Rev. 14. 2.

Mar. 7. 34.

Co. 2. 12, 4

The Angels of God ſhall call forth the Blind from the Darkneſs of the Grave, ſaying, *Ariſe, ſhine, for your Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is Riſen upon you. Lift up your Eyes round about and ſee*, what a glorious Hoſt is gather'd together, to attend upon the Lord of Life: How bright a Company of Stars follow *the Sun of Righteouſneſs. That Sun* which you ſought in vain to Behold, *Shall not be your Light by Day, neither ſhall the Moon, that decreaſeth in her Perfection, give Light unto you. But the Lord ſhall be unto you an everlaſting Light, and your God, your Glory.*

Iſaiah 60.

Thoſe Eyes that *ſaw but through a Glaſs darkly, ſhall ſee God himſelf Face to Face.* Thoſe Eyes that were dazled at beholding an excellent Object, and impair'd by looking to earneſtly upon it, ſhall be ſtrong enough to behold the Majeſty of God for ever, and de-

1 *Cor.* 13. 12.

light

light to dwell for ever upon him *who is a*
He. 12. 29. *consuming Fire.*

The Ear ſhall no longer be depriv'd of Hearing, neither ſhall it attend with difficulty to the uncertain reports of Sound, but be rais'd in perfect Strength, infinitely greater than the ſtrongeſt Faculty ever enjoy'd before: And it ſhall hear the delightful Words of pure and eternal Truth, the Inſtructions of infinite Wiſdom, the Diſpenſations of Providence juſtified, and the Myſteries of our Redemption explain'd.

And as the Tongue ſhall bear a part in thoſe Praiſes and Hallelujahs that are offer'd
Rev 5. 13. *to him that ſits on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever:* So the Ear ſhall hear their delightful Harmony, with an increaſe of Pleaſure, to all Eternity.

What great and glorious things are ſpoken of
Pſa 87. 2. *thee, thou City of God! even ſuch as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, are prepar'd*
1 Cor. 2. 9 *for them that Love their God.* That they ſhould excel every thing that our Eyes have ſeen, every thing that our Ears have heard, This alone is enough to raiſe our Admiration, and kindle an eager Deſire of Attaining to them.

But they not only excel all the Objects of our Senſes, but ſurpaſs our Underſtandings, and cannot be brought within the Compaſs of our Conceptions. The Thoughts of Men have ſo wide a Range, and ſpread themſelves ſo far on every ſide, that He alone can know their Bounds, *who laid the Meaſures of the Earth,*

Earth, and Stretch'd out the Line upon it. And yet when we have conceiv'd every thing that our Mind is capable of conceiving, when we have given a looſe to all our Conjectures, and allow'd the largeſt Scope to our Imaginations, we ſhall fall infinitely ſhort of that Glory and Happineſs, that will enter in at all our Senſes, and fill every Faculty of the Soul, in the City of God. And yet thoſe Miſerable Creatures, that are now depriv'd of the uſe of ſome of their Faculties, and are but meanly endow'd with the Gifts of Reaſon and Senſe, are Heirs of this bleſſed Inheritance, and Partakers of theſe delightful Hopes. And if they do not hide that *one Talent*, that is committed to their Charge, they will be rewarded with thoſe that had *Five Talents*, and be recompenc'd for their ſmaller Meaſure of Earthly Advantage, with the Riches of Heaven, and *the Fulneſs of God.* *Job* 38. 5. *Matth.* 25. *Eph.* 3. 19.

Having conſider'd each of the Particulars that I propos'd to you, I ſhall draw a few practical Inferences from them. And,

Firſt, Since God is the Author and Giver of all our Faculties and Powers, we ſhould gratefully devote them to his Honour and Service. The Eye and Obſervation of God is ever upon us, and as he made our Faculties, ſo he has an abſolute Knowledge of their Frame, and cannot be ignorant of the Uſe or Abuſe of them. It is he that conveys the Sounds to our Ear, and prepares it to receive them, in a diſtinguiſhing Manner.

And

And he can as eaſily hear the Whiſpers of our ſecret Sins, as the outrageous Clamours of our open Impiety.

There is not a Word in our Tongue but he
Pſ. 139. 4. *knoweth it altogether*, even before it falls from our Lips. He is acquainted with every thing that it is capable of ſpeaking, and diſcerns
Pſa. 10. 7. *the Ungodlineſs and Vanity that is under the Tongue.*

He follows the wandring of the Eye, and marks the Place where it reſts, and the Objects on which it delights to dwell. And
Eccluſ 23. *his Eyes, that are Ten Thouſand Times Brighter*
19. *than the Sun*, behold the Flame of Luſt, while it is yet kindling, and the Seeds of Iniquity, before they ſpring forth.

In the Preſence of ſuch a Witneſs, we ſhould be eſpecially careful to uſe our Faculties aright, and anſwer the gracious Intention of our great Creator.

We ſhould conſider that we alone, of all his Earthly Creatures, are endued with Reaſon and Speech, and therefore can perform a Nobler Service, than any of our Fellow-Creatures in this World can perform. Every one of them indeed diſcharges his proper Service, and the curious Workmanſhip, even of the vileſt Animal, and the ſmalleſt Plant, diſplays the Wiſdom and Power of the Lord their Maker. But Man alone is capable of ſpeaking his Praiſe, and paying the common Debt of Gratitude with the Words of his Tongue: And whilſt he offers his own Tribute to the King of Kings,

He

He can alſo collect the Share of every other Creature, and make up a mighty Summ with the united Obligations of all the Works of God.

We ſhould therefore do every thing that lies in our Power, to promote the Honour of God, and ſtrictly abſtain, from every thing that tends to his Diſhonour.

We ſhould never utter the pernicious Words of Falſhood, or violate the Eternal Truth of God. We ſhōuld never offend his Purity with lewd and vicious Jeſts, or Provoke his Majeſty with bold and inſolent Profaneneſs.

Let the Haughty Blaſphemer, that glories in the Denial of the Bleſſed Jeſus, let Him remember by whom he was made, whoſe Hand it was that fram'd the Mouth, and who gave him that Tongue, by which he Denies him. Let him put theſe ſtartling Queſtions to himſelf. *Whom haſt thou Reproach'd and Blaſphem'd? And againſt whom haſt thou exalted thy Voice, and lifted up thine Eyes on high?* And let him return (as he ought to return) this Anſwer to himſelf, *Even againſt the Holy One*, that created Man upon the Earth, and will command him to return to the Earth again. *Iſa.* 37. 23.

Let us remember that our All-ſeeing Witneſs *is of Purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; and let us endeavour to Copy after him, by preſerving the Purity of our Eyes; and never Pollute them, by beholding Evil, with a wicked Complacency, and partaking with it, by a guilty Approbation. *Hab.* 1. 13.

Let

Let us open them every Morning, to admire the Lord of the Creation, for the Beauty of his Works; and let us close them every Night, with a grateful Sense of the Benefits, that are daily display'd before us.

Let us give Attention to his holy Word, and rejoice to hear those glad Tydings, which were brought down from Heaven by the Son of God; and, Let us turn away our Ear from hearing Abominations, and shut it close against those dreadful Curses of wicked Men, that are enough *to make every Ear* Isa.3.11. *that heareth them to Tingle.*

Secondly, Since the Defect and Want of our Faculties, proceeds also from God, we should not despise or ridicule the Wants and Infirmities of our Brethren. God has offer'd several Objects to our Pity, but he has made none of his Creatures for our Contempt: and indeed Contempt becomes us no more than *Pride, which was not made for Man.* It consists of the worst Ingredients, Vanity and Presumption, and proceeds from those equally mistaken Judgments, by which we undervalue Others, and over-value our Selves. If we stand upon the higher Ground, it was God that placed us there: and if our Brother is somewhat Lower, it was God that assign'd him his Station. *We cannot make* Mat.5.36. *one Hair White, or Black, neither can we add* Mat.6.27. *one Cubit to our Stature.*

Who art Thou then, that lookest down with Scorn and Disdain, upon thy poor maim'd, or deform'd Neighbour? Consider, vain

vain Wretch, that *he that made thee in the Womb, made him*; and though *there are Diverſities of Gifts, yet it is one and the ſelf-ſame Lord, that divideth to every Man, ſeverally as he will*: and the Power, that gave thee a greater Abundance of Bleſſings, can ſtrip thee at once of all thy Pride and Glory, and beſtow more abundant Honour upon him that wanted. Job 31. 15. 1 Cor. 12.

Both may *be chang'd in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye*; thou mayſt be caſt down to a Level with *the Beaſts that Periſh*; and thy deſpis'd Brother may be rais'd to an Equality with the Angels of God. 1 Co. 15. 52

Let this Conſideration reſtrain us all from that Injurious Contempt, which though it falls immediately upon the Works of God, is, in effect, a Reproach to God their Creator.

Inſtead of Mocking at their Calamity, and making a Jeſt of their Misfortunes, Let us aſſiſt them according to our Ability, and plead the Cauſe of the Dumb, and be, *Ears to the Deaf, and Eyes to the Blind.* Job 29. 15

Thirdly, and Laſtly, Since God will either ſupply their Defects, or abundantly repair and recompence them in the Life to come, Let them ſubmit to the Will of God, and wait with Patience *till their Change cometh.* The Dumb may conſider, that the preſent Life is but as the State of Infancy, and the Tongue is always held in the Bands of Silence, during the Continuance of that weak Condition. But after the Months of Job 14. 14.

their Infancy are paſt away, their Mouth will be opened, and their Tongue will break looſe from its Reſtraint, and ſpeak of the *wonderful Works of God.* Were they not denied the Gift of Speech, they could only talk as Children, in this preſent Life; but in the Life to come, they will have a nobler Subject of Diſcourſe, and entirely *put away Childiſh things.*

The Blind may Comfort themſelves with the Thought, that a great deal of Sin and Miſery is withheld from their Eyes, and even thoſe things that are truly worthy of their ſight, are diſcern'd but imperfectly, and *ſeen but through a Glaſs Darkly*; but the Veil will one Day be remov'd; and tho' they are now confin'd to conſtant Darkneſs, yet *in their Fleſh, they ſhall ſee God; whom they ſhall ſee for themſelves, and their Eyes ſhall behold, and not anothers.* And the Deaf may compoſe themſelves with the certain Expectation of Hearing Infinitely more than the Ear has ever heard, or can yet be expreſs'd by all the Tongues of Men and Angels.

Job 19. 25. 27

And whatſoever we want, or ſuffer, Let us all give Glory to God, and ſay, *Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty; Juſt and True are thy Ways, thou King of Saints.*

Rev. 13. 3.

The Divinity of Chriſt prov'd by his Reſurrection.

A SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex*,

Upon EASTER-DAY.

REV. I. 17, 18.

Fear not; I am the Firſt and the Laſt: I am He that Liveth, and was Dead; and behold, I am Alive for evermore, Amen; and have the Keys of Hell and of Death.

WHILE the Beloved Diſciple, St. *John, was in the Iſle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt,* His crucified Lord appear'd to him, to comfort him in

his Tribulation, to confirm his Patience, and enliven his Hope. He appear'd to him, not in the Weakneſs of his mortal State, nor in the Diſgrace and Miſery of his Paſſion, but in the Glories of his Triumphant Reſurrection, and the Majeſty of *him that ſits on the Throne for ever, and ever.*

And the Affectionate Friend that *Lean'd upon his Boſom*, at his Laſt Supper, and cleav'd to him, in *the Hour of Darkneſs*, whilſt he hung upon the Croſs, was now unable to bear *the Brightneſs* of his Countenance, and was ſtrook to the Earth, at beholding *the Sun of Righteouſneſs, ſhining in his Strength.* He was quite over-power'd by his terrible Beauty, *there was no more Spirit in him, and he*
Rev. 1. 17. *fell at his Feet, as Dead.*

But he that mercifully *cover'd* his Servant *Moſes with the Shadow of his Hand, while his Glory paſs'd by*, with the ſame infinite Mercy *Laid his Right-hand upon his Faithful Diſciple*, and rais'd him up with theſe Encouraging Words, *Fear not, I am the Firſt and the Laſt: I am he that Liveth and was Dead; and behold I am Alive for evermore, Amen; and have the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

Theſe Words contain the following Particulars,

Firſt, The Character which our Saviour gives of himſelf; *I am the Firſt and the Laſt.*

Secondly, His Death and Reſurrection to Life; *I am He that Liveth and was Dead.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Continuance of his Life after Death, *behold I am Alive for evermore, Amen.*

And, *Laſtly*, His abſolute Power over Hell and the Grave; *and have the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

Each of theſe Particulars deſerves our ſerious Conſideration. And,

Firſt, The Character that our Saviour gives of Himſelf; *I am the Firſt and the Laſt.*

Were there no other Argument to prove that our Saviour was God from all Eternity, This alone would be ſufficient to prove it, and to ſtop the Mouth of every Gainſayer, that would give himſelf leave to conſider it. It was aſſerted by *Truth* it ſelf, by him that *had no Deceit in his Lips, and in whoſe Mouth there was found no Guile*, that he was *the Firſt, and the Laſt.* And it was aſſerted by him, when he had undeniably confirm'd his Veracity by riſing from the Dead, and ſhewn to the Conviction of every reaſonable Adverſary, that he committed *no Robbery, by making himſelf equal with God.* *Phil* 2. 6.

This very Character, by which he diſtinguiſh'd himſelf, is communicable to none, but neceſſarily belongs to the only true God. It denotes the Eternity of his Eſſence, and the abſolute Perfection of his Nature, which gave Being to every thing, and depends upon nothing for the Continuance of its Being.

Theſe words of our Saviour, by which he

claims and aſcribes this Divine Prerogative to himſelf, cannot be better explain'd, than by the words of the Pſalmiſt; *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Earth and the World were made: Thou art God from Everlaſting, and World without End.*

Pſa. 90. 2.

If we endeavour to meaſure all the Spaces of paſt Time, and the Ages of Eternity, we cannot find *the Beginning of his Days:* neither, if we look beyond the ſeveral Generations of Men, and the utmoſt Period of Time, ſhall we ſee *the End of his Life.* To ſpeak more properly (though it is not poſſible for mortal Man to ſpeak aright, concerning the Divine Nature) there is no Time paſt, or to come with reſpect to him, but all the Ages of the World are preſent at once; and not only *a Thouſand Years,* but even Eternity it ſelf, *is but as one Day in his Sight.*

If we reflect upon the earlieſt Antiquity, He is ſtill of an earlier Date; He alone is *The Ancient of Days.*

And if we turn our Proſpect towards the moſt diſtant Futurity, his Being reaches infinitely beyond this amazing Proſpect. *He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

Rev. 1. 8.

When *Moſes* deſir'd that God would tell him his Name, in which he ſhould ſpeak to the Children of *Iſrael,* He bid him *ſay unto them, I Am hath ſent me unto you.* This awful Name implied that eternal, independent Exiſtence, which belongs only to God, and undoubtedly belongs to Chriſt. In

In like manner, when *the Jews ſaid unto him, Thou art not yet fifty Years Old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? Jeſus anſwered, before Abraham was, I am.* He ſpoke of the Days of *Abraham*, as of the preſent Time, and did not ſay I was, but *I am.*

The Generations of Men paſs ſo ſwiftly away, and leave ſo little Tokens of Remembrance, that it can hardly be ſaid that they *Were.* Even while they continue in Being, their Life is ſo ſmall a Point, that it is but juſt Diſcernible, and it can barely be ſaid, that they *Are.* They *were but of Yeſterday*, and to Day they are no more. But God endures for Ever, *without Variableneſs, or ſhadow of Turning:* And, *I Am*, That glorious Name is peculiar to him, whoſe Being neither Began nor Ends with Time, but fills the Circle of Eternity.

When God maintains the Dignity of his Nature, in Oppoſition to the vain Idols of the Heathen, he thus appeals to his People: *Who hath wrought and done it, calling the Generations from the Beginning? I the Lord the Firſt, and with the Laſt, I am he. Before me there was no God form'd, neither ſhall there be after me. I, even I am the Lord, and beſide me there is no Saviour. Before the Day was, I am he.* *Iſai.41.4.* *Iſa.43.10.* *11. 13.*

Thus ſaith the Lord the King of Iſrael, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hoſts, I am the Firſt, and I am the Laſt, and beſides me there is no God. Hearken unto me, O Jacob, my choſen, and Iſrael my called, I am he, I am the Firſt, *Iſai.44.6.*

I alſo am the Laſt. Mine Hand alſo hath laid the Foundation of the Earth, and my Right-hand
Iſa. 48. 12, *hath ſpann'd the Heavens: When I call unto*
13. *them they ſtand up together.*

Thus does *the Jealous God, that will not give his Glory to another*, aſſert the peculiar Excellence and Eternity of his Nature, and even defy his Enemies to come in Competition with him, or pretend to the like Perfections.

It is *clear as the Noon-day*, and written as it were *with a Sun-beam* in the Sacred Writings, that *God is the Firſt and the Laſt.* This is his Diſtinguiſhing Title and Character, which He will not ſuffer to be alienated from him, or applied to any other: And therefore by neceſſary Conſequence, whoſoever bears this Title and Character, in the Holy Scriptures, is the One True God. And it is as plain from the Book of God, that this very Title belongs to his Only-begotten Son, and is frequently aſſum'd and born by Him. Before He gives his Inſtructions to St. *John*, He twice repeats it, and gives Authority to his Revelation, by taking this Character upon him. And he keeps up the Attention of his Diſciple, by frequently renewing it, and ſealing all his Promiſes with this Divine Impreſſion. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Firſt and the Laſt.*

We may therefore juſtly ſay unto the Son of God; *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Thou Lord in the Beginning haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth; and the Heavens are*

the

the Works of thine Hands. They ſhall periſh, but Thou remaineſt; and They all ſhall wax Old as doth a Garment, and as a Veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed; but Thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall not fail. Heb. 1. 8. 10, 11, 12.

As we cannot meaſure the Depth of our Saviour's Humiliation, without conſidering the high and glorious Eſtate, from whence He deſcended: So neither can we rightly admire that high and glorious Eſtate, to which He is now exalted, without conſidering the low and miſerable Condition into which he fell for our Sakes, and from whence he aroſe again. We therefore proceed,

2 *Secondly*, To conſider his Death and Reſurrection to Life: *I am He that Liveth, and was Dead.*

It is a Myſtery, which can be explain'd only by infinite Wiſdom, that the Everlaſting God ſhould become a mortal Man, and *the Lord of Life* ſhould ſubmit to the Power of *Death*. But how much ſoever it paſſes all Human Underſtanding, yet for us Sinful Creatures, this wonderful Work was wrought. Great was his Condeſcenſion, in vouchſafing to be Born into this wretched Life. Great would his Love have been, if he had Died the common Death of all Men. But his Love did not reſt here: He thought it not enough, to endure the ordinary Miſeries of Life, and to *make his Days, as it were a Span long*. But He rejoyc'd to ſuffer the ſharpeſt Tortures, that Malice and Cruelty could inflict, or Patience it ſelf could bear; and permitted

mitted even the Span of Life to be contracted into a narrower Compaſs, by the Extremity of Miſery, and the Violence of a barbarous Death.

I may juſtly hope, my beloved Brethren, that during the late Holy Seaſon, you follow'd your Lord and Maſter into the Wilderneſs with a Devout Affection, and beheld him paſſing through his mighty Conflict with the Tempter, and vanquiſhing all the Devices and Aſſaults of Satan. And as this ſolemn Feſtival drew near, I preſume, that the Melancholly Scene of his Paſſion was preſented afreſh to your Minds, and rais'd your pious Reſentment of the unnatural Outrage that purſued him to the Croſs, and *deſpitefully uſed and perſecuted him*, in the Fulneſs of his Grief. While his Shame and Miſery dwelt upon your Thoughts, it muſt neceſſarily kindle your Indignation againſt yourSins, and the Sins of all Mankind; For theſe were the malignant Cauſes of all his Sufferings: From theſe proceeded the Treachery of *Judas*, the Blaſphemy of the Prieſts and Elders, the Mockery of the Soldiers, *The Revilings of the People:* Theſe plaited his *Crown of Thorns:* Theſe *pierc'd his Hands and his Feet:* Theſe *gave him Gall and Vinegar to drink:* and from theſe bitter Fountains was drawn *all the Bitterneſs of the Cup*, that was mingled for him, and all the *Fierceneſs of the Wrath of God. A Sword muſt have gone through your Souls* at the Remembrance of theſe Things, and your Hearts muſt have Bled with Sorrow and Com-

Compaſſion for your Dying Saviour; with Sorrow and Compaſſion, like That which Fill'd *the Beloved Diſciple*, and the Mother of our Lord, when they look'd up to his gaping Wounds, and ſaw him *giving up the Ghoſt.*

But hoping that your Meditations have been already fix'd upon his Paſſion, and made you Partakers of his Sufferings, I ſhall now engage your Thoughts in the Contemplation of your departed Lord, and deſire you to behold him, for a ſhort Space of Time, under the Power of Death, that you may paſs with the greater Joy and Triumph through the Grave, and Gate of Death, to his glorious Reſurrection.

When the Malice of his Enemies had *fulfill'd the determinate Counſel* of God; and he had paid down the full Price of our Ranſom, by the tedious *travail of his afflicted Soul*, and the reſtleſs Agonies of his languiſhing Body, *He ſaid, it was Finiſh'd, and bow'd the Head, and gave up the Ghoſt.* Joh. 19.30

His Adverſaries, that perſecuted him to Death, were now convinc'd, that their Deſigns were accompliſh'd: For *the Soldiers, that broke the Legs of the Two Malefactors, that were Crucified with him*, forbore to *break our Saviour's Legs, becauſe he was Dead already*, and needed not any other Inſtance of Cruelty to compleat the Execution. This certainly prov'd, that they had done their utmoſt to Deſtroy his wretched Body, and ſerv'd alſo to *Fulfil the Scripture, which ſaid, a Bone of him ſhall not be broken.* Joh. 19.36

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His Friends alſo perceiving, that his Soul was departed from him, were deſirous to perform the laſt Offices to the Remains of their Lord and Maſter. *Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable Counſeller, that waited for the Kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and crav'd the Body of Jeſus.* And leſt He ſhould eſcape under a falſe Pretence of being Dead, *Pilate enquired of the Centurion, whether he had been any while Dead. And when he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the Body to Joſeph.*

Mar. 15. 43, 44, 45.

Nicodemus alſo (who at the firſt came to Jeſus by Night) brought a Mixture of Myrrh and Aloes. And they took the Body of Jeſus, and wound it in Linen Cloaths, with the Spices, as the manner of the Jews is to Bury.

And to ſecure this precious Treaſure, *Joſeph laid it in his own new Tomb, that was hewn out in the Rock, and he roll'd a great Stone to the Door of the Sepulchre. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ſitting over-againſt the Sepulchre.*

Matth 27. 60, 61.

Theſe were the ſorrowful Efforts of their unſhaken Love and Fidelity: This was the only Comfort that ſeem'd to be left to them, to adminiſter to his Burial: to fix their weeping Eyes on the Place where their Lord lay, and commit all their Hopes to *the Chamber of the Grave.*

But his Enemies were yet perplex'd with the Remembrance of his Predictions, and therefore addreſs'd themſelves *to Pilate, ſaying, Sir, we remember that That Deceiver ſaid,*

while he was yet alive, After three Days I will Riſe again. Command therefore that the Sepulchre be made ſure, until the Third Day. And *Pilate* permitted them to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours for their Security: *Ye have a Watch, go your way, make it as Sure as you can.* Having this Abſolute Power, *They went* immediately, *and made the Sepulchre ſure, ſealing the Stone, and ſetting a Watch.* Nothing was wanting on their part to *ſtrengthen them in their Wickedneſs*, and prevent the Eſcape of their Priſoner. No ſecret Artifices, to ſteal him away, could paſs undiſcover'd. No open Attempt to take him by Force, could paſs unpuniſh'd. If *the Seal* were broken, it would betray the Theft: If *the Stone were roll'd away*, the Noiſe would alarm the ſleeping Guards, if we could ſuppoſe, that they could ſleep at ſo critical a Juncture. And if the timorous Diſciples, that fled at the firſt Approach of Danger, ſhould recover the Courage they had loſt; yet a few wretched, diſconſolate Men, could not be ſo deſperately Preſumptuous, as to contend with the Multitude of Soldiers, that were *ſet to Watch*: or, if they could be ſo Preſumptuous, They muſt Die in the fruitleſs Attempt. *Ma.* 27 62, 63, 64, 65.

Thus his Friends lay up his Dead Body in the Treaſure-houſe of the Grave: And his Enemies labour to confine it in everlaſting Bands under Darkneſs. In the mean time his Soul goes down into the Place of departed Spirits, and Triumphs over Death and Hell, in their own accurſed Dominions.

But,

But, Who can deſcribe *the Battle* of this glorious Warriour, or ſet forth *the Greatneſs of his Strength*, with which *he Trode them in his Anger, and Trampled them in his Fury?* His wonderful Proceedings in the Interval of Time, between his Death and Reſurrection, are as yet reſerv'd from us, and cannot be fully known, till we *ſee him as he is.* We need not therefore weary our ſelves with enquiring into his ſecret Tranſactions, after his Deſcent into Hell: It is enough for us, that He took away *the Sting of Death*, and overcame all *the Powers of Darkneſs.* Neither need we *ſit with Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, over-againſt the Sepulchre, or ſeek the Living among the Dead: He is not here, but is Riſen.* This is the proper Subject of our preſent Meditations: The Sorrows of his Paſſion ſhould paſs away with *the Holy-Week.* The *Darkneſs* that *cover'd the Land* ſhould now be with-drawn, and give Place to the Dawning of this Glorious Day. *This is the Day, which the Lord hath made, we will Rejoyce and be Glad in it.*

The once afflicted Son of God, has now no more reaſon to pour forth the Words of Complaint, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* His Father now embraces him again, and gives Teſtimony to him; *Thou art my Son, this Day have I Begotten thee.* He is Born again from the Womb of the Grave, and *is the Firſt-begotten from the Dead:* for through his Reſurrection, *the Dead are begotten again to a lively Hope.*

He

He lives no more *in Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, in Watchings, in Hunger, in Thirſt, in Faſtings, in Cold and Nakedneſs*; but in the Fulneſs of God the Father, who receives him with this affectionate Welcome, *Son, Thou art ever with me, and All that I have is Thine.*

Whilſt he dwelt in this Vale of Sorrow, and was ſubject to Weakneſs and Infirmity, He declar'd the Intent of his Dying; *therefore doth my Father Love me, becauſe I lay down my Life that I might take it again.* Joh. 10. 17

The Violence of his Perſecutors was an Inſtrument in his Hand, and wrought his Work, while it ſeem'd to accompliſh their own. He offer'd his Life as a Free-gift, whilſt they vainly imagin'd, that they extorted it from him. *No Man* (ſays he) *taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my Self: I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it up.* Joh. 10. 18 No one can juſtly claim this Power, but the Author and Giver, and Fountain of Life. No one could reſtore his departed Life, but he that had Life in himſelf.

When the Jews deſir'd *a Sign* to give Authority to his Actions, *He ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this Temple, and in Three Days I will Raiſe it up. Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and Six Years was this Temple in Building, and wilt Thou Raiſe it up in Three Days?*

That blinded People miſtook the Meaning of his Prediction, and applied it to the Temple that was made by the Hands of Men. But he ſpake of a nobler Temple, the

the Temple of his Body, that was Built by the Almighty Hand of God. That other Temple was but *the ſhadow of Heavenly Things:* This was the Habitation which the Eternal God prepar'd for Himſelf, and *the Tent that he pitch'd amongſt Men.* And the Event abundantly ſhew'd the Meaning of his Prediction; for when he ſuffer'd *the Temple of his Body to be Deſtroy'd, He Rais'd it again in Three Days:* But when he Deſtroy'd the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, He would not ſuffer it to be Rais'd any more. *He hath brought her down to the Ground, and ſwallow'd her up in the Fierceneſs of his Anger: Her Gates for ever Mourn, Her Holy-Place is for ever Deſolate.* But his Body is a Temple that continues to all Eternity, and *its Second Glory* is infinitely *Greater than the Firſt.*

When he foretold the Manner of his Dying, he likewiſe foretold the Time of his Reſurrection, always declaring, That he ſhould *Riſe again the Third Day.* He laid the whole Streſs of his Authority upon it, and engag'd his Truth and Veracity for the Performance of it. The Jews were conſcious of this Prediction, and labour'd to prevent its remarkable Conſequence, and ſubvert *This Pillar and Ground of Truth.* But neither the Subtlety of the Prieſts and Elders, nor the Command of *Pilate*, nor the Watchfulneſs of the Guards, nor all *the Gates of Hell could prevail againſt it.*

When the Sabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, had brought ſweet Spices,

that

that they might come and anoint him: and they ſaid amongſt themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre? But there was no occaſion for their affectionate Offices; no occaſion to roll away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre. Behold, *the Earth Quak'd* at *giving up* him *that had been Dead, but was Alive again. He had broken in pieces the Gates of Braſs, and cut in ſunder the Bars of Iron.* The Grave yielded back her Prey, and the Bands of Corruption were *as a Thread of Towe, when it touches the Fire.* Mar. 16. 1, 3.

The Angel of the moſt High deſcended from Heaven, and had already remov'd *the Stone, which was very Great, and ſate down upon it,* to proclaim the Reſurrection of Chriſt. *The Keepers ſhook, and became as dead Men,* when they ſaw *the Lightning of his Countenance,* and the Brightneſs of his Apparel. And *the devout Women* could hardly endure the glorious Appearance. But the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts gave them this ſeaſonable Comfort, *Fear not ye, for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus which was Crucified; He is not here, for he is Riſen, as he ſaid, Come ſee the Place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell his Diſciples, that he is Riſen from the Dead: and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there ſhall ye ſee him, Lo, I have told you.* Matth. 28.

And the Women, full of *Fear and great Joy,* departed quickly, *and Ran to bring his Diſciples Word,* and communicate the wonderful Things that they had ſeen and heard. But

while they were yet on the Way, the welcome News was confirm'd by one Infinitely greater than the Angel. *Behold Jesus met them, saying, All Hail, and they held him by the Feet and worshipped him.*

Mat. 28. 9.

To shew his regard to Penitential Sorrow, *He appear'd First to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast Seven Devils, who wash'd his Feet with Tears, and wip'd them with the Hairs of her Head, and who Lov'd much, because much had been Forgiven her.* And she hastned to make the Disciples Partakers of her Joys, as she had been a Partaker of their Sorrows. And she brought the surprizing Message to them, *as they Mourn'd and Wept.* But when she told them that *Jesus was* again *alive, and had been seen of her, Their hearts fainted, for They believ'd her not.* Their hopes were buried with their Master, and could not so soon revive, as to embrace the First Assurance of his Resurrection.

Mark 16. 10, 11.

Then the same Day at Evening, when the Doors were shut, where the Disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the Midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And lest they should suspect that it was only a Delusion, *he shew'd unto them his Hands and his Side.* And they no longer doubted of the reality of his Appearance, *but were glad when they saw the Lord.*

John 20. 19, 20.

But for the more Confirmation of our Faith, St. *Thomas* was Absent when he wrought the Conviction of the other Disciples. And when they endeavour'd to convince him,

him, that Jeſus was Riſen, he was *ſlow of Heart to believe*, and refus'd to hearken to their Report, requiring ſtronger and more poſitive Evidence, as ſtrong and as poſitive Evidence as the moſt wary, and moſt jealous Infidel could demand. *He ſaid unto them, except I ſhall ſee in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thruſt my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.* And (ſuch was the Goodneſs of our Bleſſed Saviour) He was pleas'd to indulge all his Scruples, and give him all the Evidence that he deſir'd. *After Eight Days, again his Diſciples were within, and Thomas was with them. Then came Jeſus, the Doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace be unto you.* And He immediately applied himſelf to the Unbelieving Diſciple, and *ſaid to Thomas, reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thruſt it into my Side: And be not Faithleſs, but Believing.* *Joh.* 20. 25

This extraordinary Condeſcenſion, and theſe undeniable Proofs of his Reſurrection, entered into the Soul of the Cautious Apoſtle, and conſtrain'd him to make an immediate Profeſſion of his Faith: *And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God.* *John* 20. 26, 27, 28.

The Works of Deceit are *Works of Darkneſs*; They dare not appear in open Day, but lurk in ſecret Places, and ſhun and avoid *the Light.* An Impoſtor cannot ſtand the Teſt of a publick Examination, nor ſuffer

his Pretences to be ſifted and tried. But the Bleſſed Jeſus, who was *Truth it ſelf*, offer'd Himſelf to the cloſeſt Obſervation, and the ſtricteſt Enquiry. He Convers'd frequently and familiarly with his Diſciples, *He Walked and Reaſon'd with Two of them, Expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himſelf*; and ſhew'd, that every Type and Prophecy was punctually anſwer'd by a ſuitable Event. *He ſate at Meat with them*, as he had done before his Death, *and took Bread, and Bleſſed it, and brake, and gave it to them.*

Luke 24. 26. 30.

And when *he ſtood in the midſt of them* All, *and they were Terrified and Affrighted, and ſuppos'd that they had ſeen a Spirit*; *He ſaid unto them, Why are ye Troubled, and why do Thoughts ariſe in your Hearts? Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my ſelf, handle me and ſee, for a Spirit hath not Fleſh and Bones, as ye ſee me have. And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhew'd them his Hands and his Feet.*

Luke 24. 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.

Thus when *Joſeph ſaid unto his Brethren, I am Joſeph. Doth my Father yet Live? And his Brethren could not anſwer him, for they were Troubled at his Preſence*; *he ſaid unto them, come near to me, I pray you, and they came near*; *and he ſaid I am Joſeph your Brother, whom you ſold into Egypt. And Behold your Eyes ſee, and the Eyes of my Brother Benjamin, that it is my Mouth that ſpeaketh to you.*

Gen 45. 3, 4. 12.

But what need we any farther Witneſſes? The Certainty of Chriſt's Reſurrection is ſufficient-

ſufficiently prov'd. *The time would fail me* to ſpeak of all *the infallible Proofs, by which he ſhew'd himſelf alive after his Paſſion.* Let it ſuffice to ſay, that after theſe and many other Times of his Appearing to his choſen Diſciples, *He was ſeen of above Five Hundred Brethren at once:* And we cannot imagine, that All ſhould be Deceiv'd, or that All ſhould conſpire to Deceive, when there was no Proſpect of Advantage to entice and corrupt Them, no Expectation of any thing, but Diſgrace, and Tortures, and Death. 1 Cor. 15. 6

Fear not therefore: the Crucified Jeſus is certainly the True God, *the Firſt and the Laſt; He Liveth though he were Dead, and behold he is Alive for evermore, Amen;* which brings me to conſider,

Thirdly, The Eternal Continuance of his Life after Death.

To fulfill the gracious Purpoſes of infinite Goodneſs, He vouchſafed to Die: But tho' he ſubmitted to *the Pains of Death*, yet *it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* Acts 2. 24.

He was not only capable of Riſing again, but he was incapable of lying bound in the Grave. Though *his Soul* went down *into Hell*, yet it was *not left* in that accurſed Place. Even there *the Hand of God led*, and conducted *the Son of Man, and his Right-hand upheld him, that he ſhould not be Mov'd*; and though *his Fleſh* was committed to the Grave, *yet it ſaw no Corruption*, neither did the Worm come near, to hurt it.

It was enough that he ſatisfied the Law of

Death, and took the Puniſhment of Tranſgreſſors upon him. This indeed he bore in ſome Meaſure, when he entred into this mortal Life; For the very Entrance into it, is an Approach towards Death; And it may not improperly be ſaid, that *we Die Daily*, and in the midſt of Life, we are in Death.

But our Victorious Saviour has overcome all the Evils of Life, and all *the Terrors of Death*: He paſſes no more through the Labours and Conflicts of this miſerable World: He walks no more on the Borders of the Grave. But he lives with him who *is the Well of Life*, in that bleſſed Place, into which no Sin, nor Miſery, nor Death can enter.

The King of Terrors had no Power over him, but what was given by Himſelf: The Arrows of Death could not have prevail'd againſt him, had it not been his good Pleaſure to be ſmitten and die. But though he withheld his divine Power for a Time, that he might yield to a Separation of his Soul from his Body, yet he ſoon reſum'd his Strength, and ſubdued his Enemy, even when he ſeem'd to have gotten *the Dominion over him.*

As his human Soul was reunited to his Body, at his Reſurrection, ſo his Manhood was united to God for ever. And as he ſuffer'd in our Nature, ſo he dignified it by taking it up into Heaven, and raiſing it from the Grave, to Reign with him in everlaſting Glory.

This

This is matter of unſpeakable Comfort to us, and gives us a delightful Earneſt, a certain Pledge of our Reſurrection to *Life and Immortality*; which is confirm'd to us by his Abſolute Power over Hell and the Grave. *For he who is the Firſt and the Laſt, who Liveth and was Dead, and who is Alive for evermore, has the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

This was the Effect and Reward of his Victory. To *have the Keys of Hell and of Death*, ſignifies the Power that is veſted in him, to Govern and Controul them, and ſhut or open *their Gates* at his Pleaſure.

Having reſcued himſelf from the Jaws of the Enemy, *he has alſo broken the Yoke of our Burthen, and the Rod of our Oppreſſor.* The ſame Almighty Arm, that rais'd him from the Grave, *will alſo bring out the Priſoners from the Priſon, and them that ſit in Darkneſs out of the Priſon-houſe.* *Iſa.* 42. 7. With what Aſſurance and Exultation does he foretell their Deliverance! *I will Ranſom them from the Power of the Grave, I will Redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy Plagues, O Grave I will be thy Deſtruction.* *Hoſ.* 13. 14

And our mighty Deliverer has fulfill'd his Threatnings, and *deſtroy'd till he has made an end. Thy Right-hand, O Lord, is become glorious in Power; Thy Right-hand, O Lord, hath daſh'd in Pieces the Enemy: In the greatneſs of thine Excellency, thou haſt overthrown them that roſe up againſt us.* *Exod.* 15. 6, 7. To thee alone *the Praiſe* is to be Aſcrib'd, but to us the Advantage extends. For thou wert pleas'd

to fight our Battles, and conquer in our Behalf: and as by Dying thou didst Condescend to bear our common Punishment, so by Rising again, thou didst obtain our general Deliverance.

Christ is our Head, and so near is our Relation to him, that we are *Members of his Body*. And when *our Head rejoic'd* and triumph'd, all *the Members rejoic'd in him.*

Christ was the First-fruits; and he presented himself an acceptable Offering to God, that we also *in our Order* may Appear before him. And as when *the Trees shoot forth, we see and know that Summer is now nigh at Hand*, so when *Christ the First-fruits Arose*, we could not but know that *the Harvest* was approaching, and *they that were Christ's would Arise at his Coming.*

By *Dying*, he paid down the Price of our Redemption, and by his *Resurrection*, he shew'd that That Infinite Price was accepted. We are now entirely His, not only our Immortal *Souls, that return to God that gave them*, but also our vile Bodies that fall to the Ground: and no Violence can withhold them from him; whensoever he claims his Right, even *Death and Hell* must make immediate Restitution.

He has not only prov'd the Possibility, but the Certainty of our Resurrection, since He engag'd his sacred Promise for it, and Ratified that Promise by his own Resurrection. How incredible soever this Article of Faith might seem, yet it was never justly thought

Incredible;

Incredible; ſince it is certainly as eaſy to reunite the Soul to the Body, as to unite them in their Firſt Eſtate. And He that *Breath'd into Man the Breath of Life*, may Reſtore the Life that He has Taken away.

But it is no longer a Queſtion, whether it is Poſſible, Since he has given ſo remarkable an Inſtance of it: And He that Rais'd up One, can with the ſame Power Raiſe up every One, at the Laſt Day.

Though He is gone up on High with his Crucified Body, and is ſeated in the Fulneſs of Bliſs and Glory, yet He is not forgetful of his other Body, the Church, nor regardleſs of his Members that ſuffer upon Earth. But he ſays of This Body, as well as of the other, *Deſtroy this Temple, and* after a few Days, *I will Raiſe it up.* While his Faithful Servants continue in the Grave, He eſteems them, *as Bone of his Bone, and Fleſh of his Fleſh*, and bears ſo tender a Compaſſion towards them, that he is almoſt in a State of Divorce, and Separation, till They are Reſtor'd to him, *that where He is, They may be alſo.* Though *they are gather'd together, as Priſoners are gather'd in the Pit, and are ſhut up in the Priſon, yet*, at his appointed Time, *He will viſit them.* *Iſ.* 24. 22.

Their Enemies may inſult over them ſaying, *They are Dead, they ſhall not Live; They are Deceas'd, They ſhall not Riſe.* But notwithſtanding their vain Preſumption, *the dead Men ſhall live: Awake and Sing ye that dwell in the Duſt, for the Earth ſhall caſt out the dead.* *Iſ.* 26. 14. 19.

As

As *Pharaoh's Daughter deliver'd* the Infant
Exod. 2. 9. *Moſes to his own Mother*, with that Affectionate Charge, *Take this Child and Nurſe it for me*, ſo our Redeemer commits the Sons of Men, to the Care of their common Mother the Earth; and he will expect a Faithful account of her great Truſt, at the Day of his Appearing.

Though the whole Earth ſhall become a Sepulchre, and be over-ſpread with the Graves of her Children, and every Place ſhall be *full of Death*; yet even in this Senſe, *The Earth is the Lords, and the Fulneſs thereof*; and whenſoever he calls for *his Jewels*, he will not ſuffer ought of his precious Stores to be diminiſh'd.

The Grave is but an Inward Chamber, whither *the weary* retire to refreſh themſelves, and wait till *the Bridegroom cometh.* There they *ſhake of the duſt*, and lay aſide *the Garments of Corruption*, that they may *put on glorious Apparel*, and go forth *as a Bride beautifully Adorn'd, to ſit down at the Marriage-Feaſt of the Lamb.*

Our Fleſh therefore Reſts in Hope, and our Bodies are Sown with a chearful Expectation of Springing up again, and being *Quicken'd* to Eternal Life. And ſince, like all other *Grain, they cannot be quicken'd except they die*; and they muſt firſt *be Sown in Corruption*, before they can be *Rais'd in Incorruption*; This takes away the Terrors of Death, and Repreſents our once formidable Enemy, under a more pleaſing Appearance. The end of

our

our Mortal Life, is but the Beginning of Immortality; and we paſs through the Gate of the Grave to *the Everlaſting Doors of Heaven.*

Our Bodies, how frail ſoever they are, are yet with pain and difficulty diſſolv'd; and we ſtruggle with irkſom, tedious Agonies, before our earthly Building can be deſtroy'd. But we ſhall return to Life *in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye,* and be made whole by the Powerful *Word of God. He Speaks the Word, and we are made again; He Commands and we are created.* The Principles of Life will animate our Scattered Aſhes; *our Fleſh* that waſted away will *come again, and cover our dry Bones*; our Bands and Sinews will *gird us about with Strength*; and the Lord of Hoſt ſhall with Pleaſure behold his *exceeding great Army*, an Innumerable Multitude *that were dead, but are alive again, and live for evermore.*

Let us therefore, my beloved Brethren, hold faſt our Faith in Chriſt; and, Let not the Subtlety of Evil Men, undermine the foundation of our Hopes. Let us fix our Confidence in him, and ever depend upon that Almighty Being, who is *the Firſt and the Laſt.* Let the dawning of the Day, bring to our Remembrance, the Morning of the Reſurrection; and, Let not the Darkneſs of the Night make us afraid; for He is *a Light ariſing in the Darkneſs*; and He that daily bringeth us back from Sleep, the Shadow of Death, will aſſuredly *bring us back again from the Land where all things are Forgotten.* Let

us

us diligently obſerve *this Morning-Star.* And follow *the Path of his ſhining Light*, till we come to the glorious Place of *his Reſt.*

Let us no longer bury our ſelves in this World, nor delight to dwell in Corruption, but raiſe our Minds aloft, and *ſet our Affections on Things above. Why ſtand we gazing here* upon vain and ſenſual Objects? Let us *Turn away our Eyes from beholding Vanity*, and *Look up Stedfaſtly into Heaven*; for there *our Redeemer Liveth*, and there is the End of our Hopes. Let us bear the Loſſes and Diſappointments of Life with Patience, and ſubmit, even to the Loſs of our Friends, with an humble Reſignation; ſince we have ſtill a faithful Friend that Liveth for ever, and is able to make us an abundant Recompence for all our Sufferings. Let us improve our fleeting Time by thinking of Eternity, and render Death Familiar to us by continually Preparing for it. Let us conſider the worſt that he can do unto us, as no more than the feeble Efforts of his broken Strength; and whenſoever we remember our Saviour's Conqueſt, Let us *comfort our ſelves with theſe Words*, that *the Bitterneſs of Death is paſt*, and even This *our laſt Enemy is ſwallowed up in Victory.*

The Heinous Guilt of Lying to the Holy Ghost.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

University of Oxford,

At St. *MARY*'s.

Acts V. 3, 4.

But Peter ſaid, Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thy Heart to Lie to the Holy Ghoſt, and to keep back Part of the Price of the Land? Whilſt it remain'd, was it not thine own, and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own Power? Why haſt Thou Conceiv'd this thing in thine Heart? Thou haſt not Lied unto Men, but unto God.

WHEN our Crucified Saviour *went up on High, and led Captivity Captive, he receiv'd Gifts for Men, even for his Enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Pſ. 68. 18.

And he manifeſted the Fulneſs of his Power, by ſhedding his Bleſſings upon this Lower World, and ſending down his Holy Spirit to diſpenſe the Riches of his Grace.

His choſen Diſciples and Followers were expecting *This Conſolation, and Aſſembled with one Accord in one Place, waiting for the Promiſe of the Father: and lo! ſuddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a Ruſhing Mighty*
Acts 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Wind, and it fill'd all the Houſe where they were ſitting. And there appear'd unto them Cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it ſate upon each of them, and they were all fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Thus did the bleſſed Jeſus *baptize* his A-
Mat. 3. 11. poſtles *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire:* Thus *the Lord gave the Word, and great was the Company of the Preachers. Kings with their*
Pſa. 68. *Armies did flee, and were diſcomfited* by the mighty Force of the Goſpel, and Kingdoms were daily brought into Subjection to Chriſt. *A little one became a Thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong Nation.* And the Church of God,
Iſa. 60. 22. though for a time *it ſuffer'd hard* Bondage, yet at length, it appear'd *beautiful, as the Wings of a Dove, that is cover'd with Silver Wings, and her Feathers like Gold.*

When the ſaving Knowledge of Chriſt dropp'd from the Lips of the Diſciples, it preſently made many Proſelytes to the Faith, and turn'd the Hearts even of them that had *Crucified the Lord of Life. The ſacred Fire that reſted upon the Apoſtles Heads,* deſcended

alſo

alſo upon Multitudes of People, and *the Glory of the Lord cover'd the whole Congregation.* They Flock'd continually to the Laver of Regeneration, and earneſtly deſired to receive the ineſtimable Benefits of Baptiſm. And as ſoon as they were Admitted into the Church, their Affections were enlarg'd towards each other; and as the whole Multitude were united to one Head, ſo they became as it were *one Heart and one Soul.*

The Diſtinctions of Property and Private Intereſt were forgotten, and all their Thoughts met together to Promote the common Cauſe of Chriſtianity. *Neither was there any among them that Lack'd: for as many as were Poſſeſſors of Lands or Houſes, Sold them, and brought the Prices of the Things that were Sold, and laid them down at the Apoſtles Feet; and diſtribution was made unto every Man according as he had need.* *Acts* 4.34, 35.

But amongſt Thoſe that were mov'd by the Spirit of Love and Charity, and acted under the Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, *There was a certain Man nam'd Ananias, and Sapphira his Wife,* who pretended to obey his ſacred Dictates, and therefore *Sold a Poſſeſſion, but kept back Part of the Price, his Wife alſo being Privy to it, and brought a certain Part and laid it at the Apoſtles Feet.*

And St. *Peter* diſcerning their Treacherous Prevarication, ſeverely rebuk'd them for making a ſordid Reſerve, and yet Pretending to Devote the whole to the Service of God. *And he ſaid, Ananias, why hath Satan fill'd*

fill'd thine Heart to Lie to the Holy Ghoſt, and to keep back Part of the Price of the Land? Whilſt it remain'd, was it not thine own, and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own Power? Why haſt thou conceiv'd this thing in thine Heart? Thou haſt not Lied unto Men, but unto God.

Act. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4

This ſevere Rebuke, and the dreadful Vengeance that immediately purſued *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, Lead us to enquire into the Nature and Circumſtances of their Crime, and the Dignity of the Perſon againſt whom it was committed.

And we may eaſily obſerve the following Particulars:

Firſt, That *Satan fill'd their Hearts* with a wicked Imagination, and tempted them to contrive the Methods of Deceiving.

Secondly, That by his Inſtigation they were Guilty of a wilful, deliberate Lie, by which they endeavour'd to Palliate and Conceal their Fraud.

Thirdly, That they *Lied unto the Holy Ghoſt*, and attempted to deceive and impoſe upon Him. And,

Laſtly, That in ſo doing, *they did not Lie unto Men, but unto God.*

And, *Firſt*, that *Satan fill'd their Hearts* with a wicked Imagination, and tempted them to contrive the Methods of Deceiving.

As the Holy Spirit inclines us to think and do

do always ſuch things as be Rightful, ſo there is an evil Spirit continually ready to raiſe wicked Thoughts in our Hearts, and offer Motives and Provocations to Sin. He is juſtly Diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *the Great Deceiver*, and *the Father of Lies*: and he delights to exerciſe his pernicious Abilities, in framing baſe and ſubtle Deſigns, and encouraging us to take a ſinful Complacency in the dark and intricate Practices of Deceit. It was he that intic'd *Gehazi the Servant of Eliſha*, to defraud *Naaman the Syrian*, by a ſpecious Lie, and obtain a Preſent from him, by abuſing his Maſter's Name. 2 *Kin.* 5. 22

And it was He that corrupted the Intention of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and flattered them with Hopes of blinding the Eyes of the Apoſtles, and concealing their Guilt, even from the ſearching Spirit of God.

He maintains his Kingdom in this World, by ſpreading a Deluſion over it, and he gains a multitude of Proſelytes, by making them believe and *love a Lie*.

This ſhould render us aſham'd of thoſe vile Artifices that are entirely deriv'd from him, and bear the plaineſt Reſemblance of their accurſed Author. And when we are pleas'd with the Thoughts of ſupplanting and beguiling our innocent Brother, we ſhould preſently conſider, that *Satan hath fill'd our Hearts* with this wicked Contrivance; and ſhould *caſt out the evil Spirit* with Indignation and Abhorrence. We

ſhould not admire our ſelves for our ſhrewd and dextrous Management, in impoſing upon the Credulous and Unwary; nor vainly ſay, with our own Policy and Cunning, have we done this Work; but mortify our proud Conceit, by remembring that *Satan ſtood at our Right-hand*, and firſt conceiv'd the artful Scheme, and brought it to its admir'd Perfection. If Diſſimulation be Wiſdom, *the Prince of Darkneſs is* certainly *Wiſer than the Children of Light.* He is thoroughly acquainted with ſuch Knowledge, and is a perfect Maſter of all the Depths of Iniquity. And every prevaricating Villain is train'd up by him, in the School of Wickedneſs: And we may reprove him in the Words of St. *Paul* to *Elymas the Sorcerer*, *O full of all Subtlety and all Miſchief, Thou Child of the Devil, Thou Enemy of all Righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*

Acts 13. 10

The Tempter labours to render us like to himſelf, and *Rejoyces, as one that findeth great Spoils*, when the evil Work proſpers in his Hand; as it did in the caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira:* for,

Secondly, By his Inſtigation they were Guilty of a Wilful Deliberate Lie, by which they endeavour'd to Palliate and Conceal their Fraud.

We may ſuppoſe them to have been inclin'd at firſt, to make an unreſerv'd Offer of

of *the whole Price of their Land:* But the Devil finding a covetous Principle remaining within them, cloſely applied himſelf to them, and drew them back from their firſt Inclination. He perſwaded them to Act by more cautious Meaſures, and lay up a Part of their Wealth againſt the Day of Neceſſity. But leſt they ſhould loſe the Praiſe that would follow their Bounty, he advis'd them to cover their Deſign with a crafty Diſguiſe, and to pretend to give up the Whole, while they warily *kept back a Part.*

Both of them being engag'd in this Iniquity, and jointly reſolving to carry on the Cheat; *Ananias brought a certain Part, and laid it at the Apoſtles Feet.*

And St. *Peter* ſharply expoſtulated with him, for ſuffering the Devil to take Poſſeſſion of his Heart, and cheriſhing ſo baſe a Conception. He ſhew'd him the Heinouſneſs of the Sin, which was attended with this Aggravation, that it was without Occaſion or Excuſe. For *God, who loveth a chearful Giver,* did not compel him to ſell his Land at all, nor to bring the Price of it, after it was Sold. This proceeded from his own Will, and therefore whatever he gave, he ſhould have given with a ſincere and honeſt Mind. But he blaſted his Gift, by an Intention to Deceive, and corrupted his Offering, by a treacherous Reſerve.

The Apoſtle had ſcarcely finiſh'd his Reproof, when immediate Vengeance ſurpriz'd

the preſumptuous Offender, and *the King of Terrors came upon him, like an armed Man.*

And within the Space of three Hours Sapphira, not knowing what was done, came in; and Peter anſwered unto her, tell me whether ye ſold the Land for ſo much, and ſhe ſaid, yea, for ſo much: by which She repeated and doubled the Lie, which *Ananias* had told. Upon which St. *Peter ſaid unto her, how is it, that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the Feet of them which have buried thy Husband, are at the Door, and ſhall carry thee out. Then fell She down ſtraightway at his Feet, and yielded up the Ghoſt.*

Acts 5. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Thus were they jointly engag'd in the Sin and they were not divided in the Puniſhment, which was inflicted upon them, becauſe,

Thirdly, *They Lied unto the Holy Ghoſt*, and attempted to Deceive and Impoſe upon him.

The Spirit of God had made a wonderful Manifeſtation of his Preſence, and every one ſaw and heard, that *the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt* was ſhed abundantly upon the Followers of Chriſt. The Apoſtles acted by his immediate Guidance and Direction, and the whole Body of Chriſtians was animated by him. He put into their Minds good Deſires; and by his continual Help they brought the ſame to good Effect. They thought, and ſpake and liv'd, as they were

mov'd

mov'd by him, and in all Things obey'd his pious Dictates and Perſwaſions. And *Ananias* and *Sapphira* alſo, ſeem'd to be mov'd by the Impulſe of the Holy Spirit, and to concurr with the charitable Diſpoſition of the other Diſciples.

But yet they were ſo wicked, as to Imagine, that they might Deceive him, though he was preſent with all their Thoughts; and preſum'd ſo far, as to *Tempt him* with an outward Show, while they cover'd their inward Deſign.

If the Apoſtles had been directed only by their own Diſcernment, and *ſeen* only, *as Man ſeeth*, they might perhaps have been deluded by falſe Appearances, and have accepted the imperfect Offering without perceiving the ſecret Corruption. But the Holy Ghoſt was with the Apoſtles *to lead them into all Truth*, and take off the Maſque of Falſehood and Error. And *this Searcher of the Heart* was Privy to the guilty Purpoſes of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and *ſaw their Thoughts afar off*, even from their firſt Inclination to Deceive, till they had cloſely Combin'd and *caſt their Heads together with one conſent, and were Confederate againſt him.*

And He accus'd them by the Mouth of St. *Peter*, and diſdain'd to accept the polluted Sacrifice, that was offer'd with *lying Lips, and a deceitful Tongue.*

Vain, Miſtaken Wretches! How could you preſume to Hope, that your ſinful Contrivances could lie hid from Him, who num-

bers all our Thoughts, *who knoweth every Word in our Tongue*, and who gave his Apoſtles the Power of Preaching in all the Languages of the World? Could you *ſpeak wickedly to God*, and *talk deceitfully* to Him? *was it Good that he ſhould ſearch you out? or as one Man mocketh another*, did you imagine, you could *mock him*? *Should not his Excellency have made you afraid, and his Dread have fallen upon you?* For,

Job 13.

Laſtly, *By Lying to the Holy Ghoſt, you did not Lie unto Men, but unto God.*

This bleſſed Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, and was from all Eternity of the ſame Nature and Eſſence with them.

When *Jeſus the High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, was going to make continual Interceſſion for us at the Throne of God, he alleviated the Sorrow of his Diſciples, at his Departure, with this gracious Promiſe, *I will Pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you. And the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my Name, he ſhall teach you all Things, and guide you into all Truth.*

John 14. 16.

No one but God himſelf could perform this mighty Work, and ſhed this glorious

Light

Light upon the Hearts of Men. Therefore the Attributes of God were aſcrib'd to him, and he was Diſtinguiſh'd by the ſacred Character of *the Spirit of Counſel, of Judgment, of Knowledge, of Wiſdom, of Underſtanding, of Truth, and of Power.*

In vain then did *Ananias* and *Sapphira* endeavour to conceal the Myſtery of their Iniquity, from that All-ſeeing Spirit, by whom *God hath reveal'd even thoſe Things that Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have they entred into the Heart of Man to conceive: for the Spirit ſearcheth all Things, even the deep Things of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10.

As the Spirit of Man, is Man himſelf, ſo the Spirit of God, is God himſelf. We may learn this from the Compariſon which was made by St. *Paul. What Man* (ſays he) *knoweth the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of a Man which is in him? even ſo the Things of God, knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* 1 Cor 2. 11.

Becauſe this divine Perſon vouchſafes to *dwell in us, our Body* is call'd *the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Temple of the Living God.* 1 Cor 3. 16.

The Scriptures are ſaid to have been given by *Divine Inſpiration*, becauſe they were given by him. And *the Prophecy came not in old Time, by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God ſpake, as they were mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt.* 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Therefore St. *Paul* juſtly rebuk'd the ſtubborn Infidelity of the Jews with that ſevere Reflection, *Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt*

by Iſaias the Prophet unto our Fathers, ſaying, hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand, and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. For the Heart of this People is wax'd groſs, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they clos'd, leſt they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

Acts 28. 25,26,27.

It was this righteous Spirit that *was griev'd in the Days of Noah, becauſe the wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth, and every imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually.* And he Preach'd by the Voice of *Noah*, to a wicked and unrelenting People, till they had wearied his Patience and Long-ſuffering, and the Lord was conſtrain'd to ſay, *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.*

Gen. 6.

It is the Holy Ghoſt that ſays, *To Day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts as in the Provocation, in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs, when your Fathers Tempted me and Prov'd me, and ſaw my Works forty Years.*

Pſ. 95. 8,9.

He. 3. 7,8,9

He ſaid, ſurely They are my People, Children that will not Lie, ſo he was their Saviour. But They rebell'd and vex'd his holy Spirit, therefore he was turn'd to be their Enemy, and Fought againſt them.

Iſ. 63. 8. 10

Wherefore St. *Stephen* fixes this ungrateful Character upon the *Stiff-neck'd Jews, Ye do always Reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, as your Fathers did, ſo do ye.*

Acts 7. 51.

And

And *the ſame Spirit* that *ſpake in times paſt by the Prophets*, is now Preſent with every Member of the Chriſtian Church, to enlighten their Minds, to remove their Doubts, to give them faithful Counſel and Advice, to Perſwade and Reprove, to Exhort and Comfort them.

And this alone would be ſufficient, were there no other Argument to prove his Divinity. For he is every where Preſent, which is certainly a peculiar Perfection of the divine Nature.

Let it not be objected, that the Devil is always at Hand, and is Preſent in a Thouſand Places, to ſow the Seeds of Iniquity over the Face of the Earth. For *his Name is Legion*, and there is an innumerable Multitude always engag'd in the ſame pernicious Deſigns, and *running to and fro*, to accompliſh the Will of *the great Deſtroyer*. But the Holy Ghoſt is but *one Spirit*, and *That one Spirit fills the Heavens and the Earth* with his Preſence, and guards and aſſiſts his Church whereſoever Diſpers'd, and watches over the Thoughts of every ſincere Believer, *from the King that ſits on his Throne, to the Captive that lies in the Dungeon.*

And he is alſo an Obſerver of all the Sons of Wickedneſs, and a Joint-Witneſs with their own Conſcience, to accuſe them for *every evil Thought, Word and Work.*

It exceeds the Power of the Wiſeſt of Men, to ſurvey the Heart of but one Man, and take an exact Notice of every thing that

that is conceiv'd in his Breaſt. And it infinitely more exceeds any human Power to look into the Hearts of all the Children of Men, and write down a ſtrict Account of all the Secrets that lie in *that great Deep.* Therefore whoſoever is endued with this Perfection, is certainly the True God.

Every good Man has the Holy Spirit for his conſtant Companion, his faithful Guide, and his familiar Friend. He is equally near to every one that qualifies himſelf for his Friendſhip, even as near to him, as his own Soul, and more intimately Acquainted with him, than he is with the hidden Purpoſes of his own Breaſt. He cannot be confin'd to any Temple: every pious Heart is *the Habitation of his Glory*; and when He enters into it, he ſpeaks the Words of Comfort to it, *here will I dwell, for I have a Delight therein.*

No lurking Vice can eſcape his watchful Obſervation: He cannot be deceiv'd by that Deluſion which paſſes upon our Hearts, nor by *that cunning Craftineſs* by which even our own Hearts deceive us.

No one but *the Father of Spirits* can work ſo Secretly, and yet ſo Powerfully upon us, as this Almighty Spirit, works by his mild, perſwaſive Influence. He ſurprizes us with good Thoughts, when we know not from whence they riſe; and his Operations are
John 3. 8. like *the Wind that bloweth where it Liſteth, and we hear the Sound thereof, but know not from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.*

He obſerves the Bent and Inclination of our

our Minds, and ſows the Seeds of Virtue, when we are beſt diſpos'd to receive them. He nurſes our tender Diſpoſitions with an affectionate Care, and gives them a daily Supply of Strength and Nouriſhment, till they are ripen'd and grown into a confirm'd and ſettled Habit. He ſeconds the Perſwaſions of our Conſcience, and enforces all its Reproofs, attending us in our cloſeſt Privacy, and freely converſing with us, when we ſeem to be Communing only with our Selves, and retire from every thing, but from our own Thoughts. He is acquainted with our inmoſt Deſires, and offers up Petitions for us: and when through our Blindneſs we cannot, or through our Unworthineſs we dare not Ask, He makes importunate *Interceſſions for us, with Groanings that cannot be utter'd.* Rom. 8. 26.

And he vouchſafes his Preſence in the ſame manner to every one, that is willing to obey his Holy Admonitions: And he purſues even thoſe that fly from him, and intreats them to hearken, and return to their faithful Friend.

His aſſiduous Attendance upon one of us, does not render him leſs Preſent to Another; for he fills the Hearts of all Men, as if they were but *One Heart, and One Soul.*

Therefore we may conclude that as the Father is God, and the Son is God, ſo alſo the Holy Ghoſt is God.

Thus have I trac'd the Sin of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, from Satan that tempted them

to

to it, and ſhewn wherein it conſiſted, and againſt whom it was committed, even againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and have (I hope) ſufficiently prov'd, that *by Lying unto him, they Lied unto God.*

And now let us All ſeriouſly Conſider, what may be Learn'd from the Whole. And,

Firſt, We may Learn from hence, how Fooliſh and Dangerous it is, to indulge our ſelves in the Practices of Deceit: How Plauſible ſoever they may appear under the pretended Name of Wiſdom, yet in the Event and Iſſue, they prove to be but Folly.

It is a baſe and ungenerous Proceeding, to Deceive and Impoſe upon our Brother; and though the Scheme be artfully wrought, and the Contrivance laid with the moſt exquiſite Wit and Cunning, yet it ſeldom holds out to the End without being diſcover'd: and the fatal Diſcovery breaks the Snare, and expoſes the Villany with which it was prepar'd.

We are under the Obſervation of a jealous World, and a Multitude of Eyes are always Looking ſtedfaſtly upon us: and it is highly probable that they will diſcern our ſecret Iniquity, and pry into the Hiding-Places of our ſordid Deſigns.

And if it is abſurd to attempt to deceive the World; it is yet more abſurd, to endeavour to delude our own Conſciences, and bring

bring groſs Darkneſs upon them. For if we ſucceed in this unnatural Endeavour, we ſhall only render our ſelves Inſenſible of our Danger and Miſery, and fall unawares into ſpeedy Deſtruction. But it is hardly poſſible to maintain the Cheat, and entirely cover our Minds with the pernicious Deluſion. The Miſt will ſometimes be ſcattered away; The Light will ſometimes break in upon us. Our Conſcience will ſhake off the Slumber which we have caſt upon it, and will awake to Upbraid and Torment us.

But if our Conſcience could be perfectly Ignorant of our Sin, and continually regardleſs of it ſelf, yet there is an Holy Spirit that *will neither Slumber nor Sleep*, whoſe watchful Eyes are ever over us, and whoſe Knowledge and Wiſdom are Infinite. We ſhould remember this All-ſeeing Witneſs, when we are going to *encourage our ſelves in Miſchief, and Conſider how we may lay Snares, and ſay, that no Man ſhall ſee us.* When *we imagine Wickedneſs and practice it, which we intend to keep ſecret among our ſelves, every Man in the deep of his Heart*; we ſhould call to Mind that terrible Vengeance which ſmote *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; and aſſure our ſelves, that the God of Truth and Faithfulneſs *will ſuddenly ſhoot at us alſo with a ſwift Arrow*, and overtake us in the midſt of our Sins.

And when we have found out *a Place which no one knoweth, and which the Eye of Man hath never ſeen*; and are juſt ready to bring

bring forth the Sin of our Boſom, and to take our Fill of unlawful Pleaſures, becauſe *it is hid from the Eyes of all Living*, and kept cloſe even from the ſharpeſt Enquiry; we ſhould reſtrain our Wickedneſs by recollecting this ſtartling Truth, *Surely the Lord is in this Place, and we knew it not!* For whereſoever we are, *The Eyes of the Holy Spirit are upon the Ways of Man, and he ſeeth all his Go-*
Job 34. 21, *ings. There is no Darkneſs nor Shadow of*
22. *Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themſelves.*

How Fruitleſs are our Endeavours to cover our Sins from thee, *O Lord, for thou haſt ſearch'd us out, and known us; Thou knoweſt our Down-ſitting, and our Up-riſing; Thou underſtandeſt our Thoughts long before: Thou art about our Path and about our Bed, and ſpieſt out all our Ways. Whither ſhall we go from thee, O Holy Spirit, Whither ſhall we fly from thy Preſence? If we aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there, If we make our Bed in Hell, Behold thou art there. If we take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; even there ſhall thy Hand lead us, and thy Right-hand ſhall hold us. If we ſay, ſurely the Darkneſs ſhall cover us, even the Night ſhall be Light about us: yea, the Darkneſs hideth not from thee, but the Night ſhineeth as the Day: the Darkneſs and the Light*
Pſal. 139. *are both alike to thee!*

Secondly, We ſhould learn to avoid thoſe Sins, that moſt nearly reſemble the Sin of *Lying to the Holy Ghoſt*. I might mention

many

many Inſtances of this Kind, but the Time will permit me to inſiſt only on Two or Three Particulars.

The Firſt, is the Sin of bearing Falſe Witneſs, which is Deſtructive to the Property, the Liberty, the Reputation, and the Life of our Neighbour. When we are call'd upon to give our Teſtimony in the Courts of Juſtice, our Country appeals to us in Caſes of the greateſt Moment, and lays an entire Streſs, and a full Dependance upon our Veracity.

And to add the more Authority to our Witneſs, we ſtrengthen and enforce it with the Truth of God. We not only ſuppoſe him to be ordinarily Preſent, but we deſire him to vouchſafe his more eſpecial Preſence. And if we are ſo Preſumptuous as to abuſe this dread Solemnity, and to aſſert a wilful deliberate Lie, either to gratify our Malice, or to obtain a Reward, we defy the Infinite Knowledge and Power of the holy Spirit, and ſtrive (as much as in us lies) to make him Partaker of our Falſhood. We inſolently Summon him to be a Joint-Witneſs with us, in Swearing away all that is Dear to our Innocent Brother; and adventurouſly utter *the Words that are cloath'd about with Death*, with a ſcornful Contempt of all the Terrors of his Vengeance.

Surely I need not tell you, that this reſembles *Lying to the Holy Ghoſt:* ſurely I need not multiply Words to diſſwade you from committing this great Abomination.

A Second Inſtance of this Kind, is the Sin of thoſe unfaithful Paſtors that corrupt the Word of God, and poyſon their Flock with falſe Doctrine.

This is an unnatural Abuſe of the ſacred Truſt, that was committed to them by the Spirit of God; and an ungrateful Return to *the Holy Ghoſt, who made them Overſeers of the Church of Chriſt.*

To him they ſolemnly Swore, that they would *feed their Flock with the ſincere Milk of the Word.* How baſe and perfidious are they, if they neglect the Performance of their Vow, and act in Contradiction to it! and, How much more baſe and perfidious, if they intended to Betray, while they promiſed to be Faithful; and ſubtlely entred into the Miniſtry, with a full purpoſe of corrupting and deſtroying the Church of God!

I ſhall mention yet another Inſtance of the like ſinful Nature, which is the pretending Falſely to the Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and delivering our own vain Inventions, with the Authority of his aweful Name. Such was the Caſe of *thoſe fooliſh Prophets* in the Days of Old, *that Propheſied out of their own Hearts, and follow'd their own Spirit*, and yet boaſted, that they had receiv'd Divine Inſpiration. But God rebuk'd their Blaſphemous Pretences, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, ſaying, *Have you not ſeen a vain Viſion, whereas ye ſay, the Lord ſaith it, albeit I have not ſpoken, becauſe ye have ſpoken Vanity, and ſeen Lies: Therefore behold I am againſt you, ſaith the Lord God.*

Ezek. 13.

And

And ſuch alſo there have been in theſe latter Days; evil Men that have Invented the moſt horrid Impieties, and the moſt dangerous Errors, and confidently deliver'd them, as the Immediate Dictates of the Holy Ghoſt.

And our Church and Nation continue to feel the Remains othat Miſery and Deſolation, which were brought upon them, by thoſe preſumptuous Wretches, that perform'd every kind of Evil, in the Name of the Lord. Their pernicious Doctrines yet ſwarm amongſt us; and their falſe Pretences have brought a laſting Reproach, even upon the true Religion; and inclin'd a Multitude of Libertines, to treat the Goſpel it ſelf, as a Cheat and Impoſture.

But leaving this diſagreeable Subject, we ſhould,

Thirdly, Learn to preſerve the Purity of our Intentions in all Caſes, and eſpecially in the Offices of Religion. For *the Holy Spirit is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of our Heart*; and by them our Actions will be Juſtify'd or Condemn'd.

The Obſervation of Men can reach no farther than our outward Behaviour, or can gueſs but uncertainly at our inward Sentiments. But the Holy Ghoſt is thoroughly acquainted with the Grounds and Principles of our Actions, and ſees the Spring of every ſecret Motion, and the firſt Kindling of every Inclination that ſtirs within us.

We muſt not therefore perform our Duty

with any evil Intention; for that will turn it into Sin, and render it an Abomination in his Sight. We muſt not do it with a mercenary Deſign, to gain the Favour, or avoid the Diſpleaſure of Men, but with a pure and ſincere Deſire, to obtain the Approbation of God. We muſt not *keep back a Part*, while we pretend to offer him our whole Heart; nor make a Reſerve of our favourite Sins, while we intreat him to accept of us, as a perfect and unblemiſh'd Sacrifice.

When we go to the Altar, we ſhould ſearch every Corner of our Breaſts, and ſtrictly examine, whether we have duly prepar'd our ſelves for the Heavenly Feaſt; and to prevent our being deceiv'd in ſo Important an Affair, we muſt put theſe trying Queſtions to our Souls; Are we unfeignedly Sorry for our paſt Sins? Do we firmly reſolve to forſake them for the time to come? Are we poſſeſs'd with a juſt ſenſe of Chriſt's Infinite Mercy and Goodneſs? And has his Example prevail'd with us, to be in perfect Charity with all Men?

And becauſe our Saviour has ſo earneſtly inſiſted upon this, as his beloved Commandment, we muſt be more particularly Careful in this Point, that no remains of Enmity may lurk within us. To this End we muſt frequently repeat theſe Queſtions to our ſelves; Is our Reconciliation with our offended Brother, True, and Sincere? Or is it not, only pretended for the ſake of Decency

cency and Show, and barely to Palliate and Skin over the Wound? When we embrac'd him with Tokens of Friendſhip, were our real Sentiments agreeable to thoſe Profeſſions? Are we as ready to do Offices of Kindneſs to him, as if he had never Injur'd us. Do we forgive him, as ſincerely and abſolutely, as we deſire to be Forgiven?

We muſt alſo enquire for what Reaſon we come to the Holy Table; is it to partake of the Ineſtimable Benefits that God has prepar'd for us? Is it to ſhew our Communion with Chriſt our Head, and with all the Members of his Body? Is it to expreſs our faithful Affection to that Church with which we Communicate or is it not, only to obtain a Place of Profit or Honour? Is it not with an Intention of being falſe to that Church, *at whoſe Breaſts we are nouriſh'd?* Do we not occaſionally join with her, while we wait for an Opportunity of *breaking down her Altars, and deſtroying her Prophets with the Sword?* Let no ſuch Inſincerity be ever ſo much as nam'd amongſt us: Let no ſuch Treachery, ever be charg'd upon us. Let not our Lord ſay of any of us, as of Judas, *he that dippeth his Hand with me in the Diſh, the ſame ſhall Betray me.*

But let us cleanſe our Hearts, as from every other Pollution, ſo particularly from the Guilt of Inſincerity. Let us conſider whoſe *Temples we are*, and prepare for the Reception of that Divine Gueſt, that deſires to make his Abode with us. Let us

not receive him only *as a Gueſt that tarrieth but a Day*; but let us encourage him to ſtay continually with us. *When we go, may he lead us; when we ſleep, may he keep us; and when we awake, may he talk with us. For his Commandment is a Lamp, and his Law is Light, and his Inſtructions are the way of Life.*

Pro. 6. 22, 23

The

The ROYAL MARTYR.

A SERMON

Preach'd at

Beeding in *Suſſex*,

January XXX. 1723.

REV. II. 10.

—Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.

JESUS, *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the Right-hand of the Throne of God.* But tho' he is infinitely more diſtant from us, than the Heavens are from the Earth, yet he looks down from *the Habitation of his Glory* upon his righteous Servants, and ſheds *the Light of his Countenance* upon them, to encourage them to run

the ſame painful Race, and tread in his Steps, though they are mark'd with Blood. *Leſt they ſhould be weary and faint in their Minds*, he preſents a Crown of Immortality to the Eye of their Faith, and ſtretches forth his Arms to receive them into a Share of his Kingdom. This affords an abundance of Conſolation to them, that though *they Die daily*, yet *their Redeemer liveth*; tho' they endure *temporal* Miſery, yet their Head enjoys *eternal* Happineſs; though they are cover'd with Scorn and Contempt, yet he reigns in the Fullneſs of Majeſty; and he will not be unmindful of their wretched Condition, but as he has permitted them to partake of *his Bitter Cup*, he will alſo in due time make them Partakers of his Reward, and as *they ſuffer with him, they ſhall alſo reign with him in Glory.*

He vouchſafed to give this Conſolation, to the *Church of Smyrna. Theſe things* (*ſaith the Firſt and the Laſt, which was dead and is alive.*) *I know thy Works, and thy Tribulation and Poverty,* (*but thou art Rich,*) *and I know the Blaſphemy of them which ſay, they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan. Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer: Behold the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that ye may be tried; and ye ſhall have Tribulation ten Days: Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

Rev 2. 8, 9, 10.

The glorious Character of thoſe Chriſtian Heroes, that have follow'd *the Captain of Salvation* even unto Death; and the Bleſſed

State

State which they enjoy, as a Recompence for their Fidelity, were thus deſcribed to St. *John* by one *of the Elders* that miniſtred to the moſt High God: *Theſe are they which come out of great Tribulation, and have waſh'd their Robes, and made them White in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple; and He that ſits on the Throne ſhall dwell among them. They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any Heat. For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto Living Fountains of Waters, and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Rev. 7. 14, 15, 16, 17.

What great and wonderful Actions have been wrought by them whoſe *Hope was full of Immortality!* Being animated with this lively Hope, and ſtrengthned by divine Grace, they rejoic'd and triumph'd in Hunger and Thirſt, in Priſons and Chains, in Racks and Tortures; and went with undaunted Boldneſs to meet *the King of Terrors*, when every kind of Miſery was *ſet in aray* before them. For notwithſtanding the utmoſt Efforts of the Sons of Violence, *the Righteous* knew aſſuredly that they ſhould *live for evermore*. How *deſtitute* ſoever they were, yet *their Reward was ſtill with the Lord*; and how much ſoever they were *forſaken, the Care of them was ſtill with the moſt High.* Though they were ignominiouſly treated by *the Scorn of the Wealthy, and the Deſpitefulneſs of the Proud,*

yet they were ſuſtained by a firm and unmoveable Perſwaſion, that *they ſhould receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful Crown from the Lord's Hand*, though they were driven over the Face of the Earth, as *the refuſe and off-ſcouring of all things*, yet *with his Right-hand would he cover them, and with his Arm would he protect them.*

The Wiſdom and Piety of the Church has taught us to commemorate the Meekneſs and Patience, the Courage and Conſtancy of theſe bleſſed Saints; and commanded us to look towards that *cloud of Witneſſes*, that ſealed the Faith with their Blood, and left us an Example, that we might be guided by *the ſhining Light of their Path to the Habitation of eternal Glory.*

And it is neceſſary that we ſhould often bring them to Remembrance, ſince *the Love of many waxes cold*, and *the Holy Fire*, that came down from Heaven, has almoſt forſaken the *Tabernacle of God.*

The Zeal of the Primitive Ages was frequently renewed, and kindled into a ſtronger Flame, by the triumphant Deaths of the noble Army of Martyrs. And if any Example can reſtore us to the true Chriſtian Integrity; if any can *ſtrengthen the Things that remain and are ready to die*, behold the return of this Day preſents an Example to us, which (we may juſtly Hope) will ſtir up the languiſhing Principles of our holy Religion, and embolden us to aſſert and defend our excellent Church, againſt the Wiles

and

and Aſſaults of Schiſm, and, through the Grace of God, even againſt *the Gates of Hell.*

Behold a King that renounc'd the Glories of his earthly Kingdoms, and was *Faithful unto Death, even unto a ſhameful Death, that he might inherit a Crown of Life!* Behold a King that *made not Gold his Hope, nor the fine Gold his Confidence*; that was not lifted up with vain Thoughts of a Robe, a Scepter, or a Diadem, but eſteem'd a good Conſcience infinitely better than all *the Gold of Ophir*; and conſtantly profeſs'd the Truth in its greateſt Purity, and clave to his Mother, the Church of *England*, in *the Day of Trouble, and of Rebuke and Blaſphemy!* He had embrac'd her with a mature and perfect Judgment, and he defended her Rights, her Doctrine, and her Worſhip, with his Arms, with his Writings, with his Life. *Till he Died he would not remove her from him, he held her faſt, and would not let her go*; neither would he conſent to a ſacrilegious Violation of her, though by Conſenting to it, he might have ſecured his Riches, his Crown, his Liberty, and his Life. Tho' his Enemies were reſolv'd *to ſlay him*, yet *he put his Truſt in his God*, and entirely *committed his Cauſe to him*, who *could heal him when he was wounded, and revive him, tho' he were deſtroyed.* And when he had paſs'd through all the Forms of Cruelty, that Malice could invent, to *prove his Meekneſs, and try his Patience, his rejoicing was this, the Teſtimony of his Conſcience, that in Simplicity*

2Co.1.12 *city and Godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, he had had his Converſation in the World.*

That the Example of the Royal Martyr may have the ſtrongeſt Influence over us, it behoves us more particularly to conſider,

Firſt, How much he Suffer'd. And,

Secondly, How conſtantly he maintain'd his Faithfulneſs and Integrity, through the whole Courſe, and even the very Extremity of his Sufferings. And,

Firſt, We are to conſider how much he Suffer'd.

But *the time would fail us*, ſhould we attempt to take a diſtinct Survey of every Calamity that fell upon him; and it would require a large Meaſure of Patience, equal almoſt to that Patience with which he Suffer'd, barely to hear an exact Account of his Sufferings. Could we have foreſeen this Scene of Miſery, while it was yet Approaching, we muſt have broken out into the Words of *Balaam: Alas! Who ſhall Live* Num. 24. 23. *when God doth this?* And if we look upon this Heap of Troubles, when they are gather'd together, and brought to their dreadful Conſummation, we muſt immediately Appeal to all that paſs by, and ſay, *Ask now of the Days that are paſt which were before you, ſince the Day that God created Man upon*

the

the Earth, and ask from the one ſide of Heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any ſuch thing as this, or hath been heard like it? We muſt indeed for ever except the bitter Paſſion and Death of our crucified Saviour, who *bore the Griefs and carried the Sorrows* of the whole World, whoſe Sufferings were equivalent to all the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin, *whoſe Blood ſpeaks* infinitely *better things than the Blood of all the Martyrs*, and whoſe Merits alone can expiate the unparallel'd Sin of this unhappy Day. But when we have made this juſt Exception, we may truly affirm, that there *was never any Sorrow like unto the Sorrow of* our Pious King. No Example of former Ages can equal his Caſe. None in future Ages, we humbly hope, will ever reſemble it.

Even when *the Cloud is* but juſt *ariſing*, and the Sons of Violence are ſowing the Seeds of Confuſion, it provokes our Aſtoniſhment, that the moſt Merciful of Kings, and one of the Meekeſt of Men, the moſt indulgent Father of his People, the moſt zealous Advocate for the Proteſtant Religion, and the moſt faithful Defender of the Church of *England*, ſhould be cenſur'd and accus'd of baſe and ſubtle Deſigns to eſtabliſh Popery, and Arbitrary Power. But theſe injurious Libels, and poyſonous Violations of his Honour, are ſoon follow'd by more brutiſh Clamours and tumultuous Violence. And though every pretended Grievance was redreſs'd, and larger Privileges

leges were granted, than the moſt loyal People had ever obtain'd from the kindeſt of his Predeceſſors, yet was he daily urged with ſtronger Importunity, to give up the Peace of his Conſcience, to deſtroy the ſacred Rights of God's Church, and to ſacrifice his deareſt Friends.

And when *the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs* came in upon Him *like a wide breaking in of Waters, and the Counſel of the Wicked laid ſiege againſt him*, it muſt be confeſſed, that in Hopes of ſaving the Nation from utter Deſtruction, by the Advice of them whoſe Office it was to direct his Conſcience, and even at the Requeſt of the very Perſon that Suffer'd, he permitted his ableſt Counſellor to be wreſted and torn from his Boſom, and gave his unwilling Conſent to his Death, by paſſing an Act that was barbarouſly preſs'd upon him, an Act without Precedent in any Hiſtory, an Act which the accurſed Authors thought too bad for Imitation, and which Poſterity ſhould be aſhamed and afraid to Imitate. But as this Compliance was almoſt the only Crime that could be charged upon him, ſo it is rather to be numbered amongſt his Sufferings, than charg'd upon him as a Crime, ſince it was one of the bittereſt Ingredients in all his Troubles; and ſince he daily lamented it with Tears of unfeigned Repentance, and fully repaired the Injuries done to that Noble Perſon, by bearing Teſtimony to him in his laſt Hour, and bewailing his Death, when he was regardleſs of his own. But

But no reaſonable Conceſſions, nor even this extraordinary Compliance, could deliver him from the *Strivings of the Multitude*, nor *Aſſwage the Madneſs of the People*. Their *proud Waves* could not be *ſtay'd*, but daily encroach'd upon him with increaſing Violence, and not only endanger'd his Liberty and his Life, but endeavour'd to invade his Conſcience, and lay waſt his Judgment.

It was no longer conſiſtent with his Honour or Safety, to continue in that Place, which had been the uſual Seat of Majeſty, and even the Throne of his Glory. He was compell'd to fly into the diſtant Parts of his Dominions, and to give reſt to his weary Mind, by committing himſelf to the Affections of his better Subjects. But ſtill he reach'd out his Arms to embrace the Rebellious Prodigals, if they would yet return to a Senſe of their Duty and Intereſt; and labour'd to reunite himſelf to thoſe ungrateful Wretches, and *bind up all their Sores* with the Cords of Love.

But the humbleſt Condeſcenſions, the mildeſt Perſwaſions, and the ſtrongeſt Arguments, could produce no other Effect but virulent Libels, inſolent Invectives, and ſeditious Remonſtrances.

His ſacred Perſon was denied Admiſſion into one of his own Towns, and the Strength that was laid up then at his own Expence, to defend the Kingdom, was Rebelliouſly turn'd againſt him: An Army was rais'd to Deſtroy him, under a Pretence of Fighting for

for Him, and his Name and Authority were abuſed, to countenance and ſupport the Cauſe of his Enemies.

And when the deluded Multitude had Madly contributed towards the accurſed Work, and freely caſt in their laſt Mite to fill up *the Treaſures of Wickedneſs*, and *to purchaſe a Field of Blood*, the King, tho' Naked and Unarmed, without even that neceſſary Guard which Decency required, and without any Defence, but the Affections of his People, was yet abſurdly charg'd with Levying War, or rather with Raiſing a Rebellion againſt his Parliament.

The Nation being thus hurried into Confuſion, the Branches of the Royal Family were torn aſunder, and our afflicted Sovereign was ſeparated from the Wife of his Boſom, whom he loved as his own Soul. And when his exil'd Queen had begg'd for that Relief, which his neceſſitous Circumſtances required; and endeavour'd to give Him that Aſſiſtance, which the Dictates of Nature, and her own Bowels oblig'd her to give: She was cloſely Purſued by thoſe very Ships that ought to have Conducted her home in Safety; and the Place in which She hop'd to Repoſe herſelf, was made the Mark, againſt which all their Cannons were directed; and all their Force was bent againſt that little Shelter which She fought in vain; and She was compell'd to expoſe herſelf to the open Air, during the Hours of Reſt, that She might eſcape the Arrows that were

were maliciouſly aim'd againſt her Life; and the unnatural Rebels proceeded to ſo high a Degree of Inſolence, that they Impeach'd the Queen of High-Treaſon, for aſſiſting the King her Husband.

Tho' in the Progreſs of the War, God vouchſafed to Bleſs the Royal Arms with many proſperous Succeſſes, yet every Victory was attended with a heavy Allay of Trouble: Our Sovereign's Heart bled afreſh for the repeated Miſeries of his Subjects, and it grieved him to ſee them Weltring in each others Blood; many of them dying in obſtinate Rebellion againſt Him, and many others falling a Sacrifice to their Duty, and loſing their precious Life in his juſt Defence. And if his Compaſſions yern'd over the dead Bodies of his Enemies, what Agonies muſt he feel, for the untimely Death of his Friends! His Heart was always tender, and continually pierc'd through with theſe Sorrows; therefore he us'd his Succeſs, as a Motive to ſtill greater Condeſcenſion, and ſtoop'd down from the Height of his Proſperity, to beſeech unreaſonable Men to accept of Peace, and offer'd them better Terms, than Confidence it ſelf could ask for. He conſider'd that the Scene of all this Calamity was in the Bowels of his own Kingdom, that all the Blood which was ſpilt, was of his own Subjects; and that what Victory ſoever it ſhould pleaſe God to give him, muſt be over thoſe who ought not to have lifted up their Hands againſt him. Therefore he interceded with them

them in their own Behalf; and it wearied his righteous Soul, to find that all his Interceſſions were made in vain. They were Deaf to all his Overtures, ſpurn'd at every Propoſal of Accommodation, and preſum'd to Impriſon the Meſſenger that brought his gracious Invitations to them. And inſtead of ſhewing any Tendency towards Peace, they labour'd to impoſe greater Hardſhips upon him, than the moſt barbarous Conquerors had ever impos'd upon the meaneſt Slaves, imperiouſly requiring him to juſtify the War againſt Himſelf; to concurr in deſtroying his faithfulleſt Adherents, to aboliſh the ſacred Orders of the Church, to renounce the Liberty of his Conſcience, and to deliver up God's Inheritance to the ravenous Jaws of Sacrilege.

It was a great Addition to his Miſery to hear, that his Subjects were perpetually oppreſs'd with heavier Impoſitions, than any lawful Prince had ever laid upon them; and Monthly Taxes rigidly exacted, and rais'd by the ſevereſt Diſtreſs, at the arbitrary Pleaſure of a few mercileſs Tyrants, whenſoever his wearied People delay'd but a few Days, to ſatisfy their greedy Extortion. And though it was an unſpeakable Satisfaction to him, that he never conſented to the Injuries that were done to the pious Fathers, and the holy Offices of the Church, yet he could not but grieve in the bitterneſs of his Soul, to find that our excellent Liturgy, and the venerable Order of Biſhops

Biſhops were caſt out with Clamour and Outrage, and an innocent Prelate, Hated for nothing but his extraordinary Abilities, his Learning, his Zeal, and his Devotion; was unjuſtly Condemn'd by a pretended Ordinance of Parliament, and put to Death in the preſence of many thouſands of Spectators.

And though he had ſtill the liberty of *Worſhipping God in the Beauty of Holineſs*, and enjoy'd the unblameable Prayers of his Mother, the *Church of England*, in that delightful Sanctuary, the ever Loyal Univerſity of *Oxford*; yet he could not but Mourn for the deplorable Condition of many others of her Children, who were denied that glorious Privilege, *whoſe Souls were athirſt for God, and long'd to appear before the Preſence of God: and whoſe Tears were their Meat, Day and Night, while their inſulting Enemies daily ſaid unto them, Where is now your God?* Pſ. 42.2,3

And we can hardly mention the Comforts that he enjoy'd, in his belov'd Refuge, the Seat of Learning and Fidelity, before it is ſtraitly Beſieg'd, and he with Difficulty eſcapes the Hoſt of Enemies, that were Encamp'd round about it; and it is hard to follow him after his unwilling Departure from it, for *he is hunted* from Place to Place *like a Partridge upon the Mountains*, and *the Deluge* of Miſery and Deſolation is ſo widely ſpread, *that he cannot find any reſt for the Sole of his Foot.*

After many different Turns of Succeſs and Misfortune, his Strength is broken by an unhappily-deciſive Battle, and his moſt valuable Papers, and the very Secrets of his Soul, fall into the Hands of his Enemies: and ſuch is their Inhumanity, that they rifle, publiſh, and expoſe even the Letters that paſs'd between him and his affectionate Queen, and his private Correſpondence with his intimate Friends. And ſo little is their regard to Decency, that they maliciouſly interpret every tender Expreſſion, every familiar Word, and make them the Subject of their unnatural Sport and Scorn.

The unfortunate King, being reduc'd by preſſing Calamity, at length reſigns himſelf to the Subjects of his own native Kingdom, hoping that they might yet have ſome remains of Affection, and might ſtrive to blot out the Diſhonour of their paſt Ingratitude, by reſtoring their injur'd Sovereign to his undoubted Right. And their Promiſes were anſwerable to his Hopes. But alas! theſe perfidious Wretches ſet their King to Sale, and deliver him a Prey to more mercileſs Rebels; in this, reſembling *Joſeph*'s *Brethren*, who though they were perſwaded *not to let their Hand be upon him, becauſe he was their Brother and their Fleſh, yet they ſold him to the Iſhmaelites for Twenty pieces of Silver.*

Gen. 37. 27, 28.

Whilſt the royal Captive is in the Hands of the victorious Army, his Afflictions are imbitter'd to him by a ſtrange Variety, he being

being ſometimes confin'd with the ſtricteſt Rigour, and reſtrain'd from the Sight of every one, but his traiterous Guards; and at other times allow'd a larger Liberty, addreſs'd to with a Shew of Humanity, flatter'd with Profeſſions of Duty, and even permitted to converſe with his Chaplains, his Friends, and his Children. Nothing was left unattempted that could Work upon his Hopes, or his Fears; the Scene was chang'd according to the different Purpoſes of the great Tyrant and Impoſtor, and to heighten the Mockery, the Enſigns of Majeſty, and the Terrors of Death, were occaſionally ſet before him.

Being wearied with this uncertain, perplexing State, he makes his Eſcape, but knows not whither to fly for Safety. He tries the Fidelity of one of his Subjects, from whom he might have expected faithful Protection; and he gives him a glorious Opportunity of gaining an immortal Name, by ſaving a King and Kingdom. But the unnatural Villain, regardleſs of true Honour, betrays the ſacred Truſt, and makes his Gueſt his Priſoner.

We have hitherto ſeen only *the beginning of Sorrows*, but now the *Hour of Darkneſs is* at hand. The Pious King has no proſpect of any thing, but ruinous Walls, deſolate Rocks, and raging Seas; no Companion to alleviate his Grief, no Friend to divide the Cares of his Breaſt, no Miniſter of God to aſſiſt him in the holy Offices of Religion,

as he himſelf expreſs'd it in his devout Complaints; the Solitude they confin'd him to, added the Wilderneſs to his Temptations: For the company the obtruded upon him, was more ſad than any Solitude could be. But his Goodneſs vanquiſh'd even thoſe choſen Spies that were ſet over him, and his invincible Patience wrought their Converſion.

To be refus'd the Aſſiſtance of his Chaplains, was an inſtance of Cruelty that ſate heavier upon him than all his other Afflictions. "If (ſays he) I had ask'd my Revenues, my Power, or any one of my Kingdoms, it had been no wonder to have been denied in thoſe things, where the evil Policy of Men forbids all juſt Reſtitution, leſt they ſhould confeſs an injurious Uſurpation. But to deny me the ghoſtly Comfort of my Chaplains, ſeems a greater Rigour and Barbarity, than is ever us'd by Chriſtians to the meaneſt Priſoners, and greateſt Malefactors; whom tho' the Juſtice of the Law deprives of worldly Comforts, yet the Mercy of Religion allows them the Benefit of their Clergy, as not aiming at once to deſtroy their Bodies, and to damn their Souls. But my Agonies muſt not be reliev'd with the Preſence of any one good Angel, for ſuch I account a learned, godly, and diſcreet Divine; and ſuch would I have all mine to be. They that envy my being a King, are loath I ſhould be a Chriſtian; while they ſeek to deprive me of all things elſe, they are afraid, I ſhould ſave my Soul."

Theſe

Theſe were the Words of the bleſſed Martyr, Words that ought to be *engraven with a Pen of a Diamond*, Words that are almoſt enough to turn *our Head into Waters, and our Eyes into a Fountain of Tears.*

Whilſt he continu'd under a ſtrict and diſconſolate Impriſonment, Propoſals were offer'd to him, offenſive to his Conſcience, and ſhocking to all the Principles of humane Nature. And becauſe his noble Soul diſdain'd to ſubmit to ſuch hard Conditions, they reſolved to make no more Addreſſes to him, and caſt him off and abandon'd him, as if he was no longer to be counted amongſt the Living.

They indeed vouchſafed to recede from this inhumane Reſolution, and condeſcended once more to enter into a Treaty with him. But the Commiſſioners appointed to treat, were ſo limited in their Inſtructions, and ſo ſtraitned in Time, and had ſo little Power to hearken to his maſterly Reaſons, or conſent to the juſteſt Alterations, that there could be hardly any Hopes of Succeſs from that Treaty; yet he ſatisfied them beyond Expectation, and yielded more to their extravagant Demands, than ever any King had yielded to his Subjects. But when the Wounds were almoſt cloſed, and the Royal Hand had well-nigh healed all their Breaches, freſh Orders came to tear them open again; more injurious Articles were ſtill thruſt upon him, and worſe Endeavours were us'd to bring his generous Mind into a more ſlaviſh Captivity.

And when his Goodneſs had ſo far defeated even theſe accurſed Deſigns, that his Conceſſions were voted to be ſufficient and ſatisfactory, That only-impartial Vote was over-ruled by an armed Force; the Perſons that concurr'd in it, were violently ſeiz'd and impriſon'd, and the Hopes of Peace cancell'd and deſtroy'd, by the ſmall Remainder of a Parliament, a few deſperate Wretches, educated in Miſchief, and pamper'd with Blood.

They now finally reſolve to make no more Addreſſes to him, haſten to fill up the Meaſure of their Iniquities, and prepare a Charge of High-Treaſon againſt their King.

But before we come to this Scene of Horror, there is one particular Inſtance of Barbarity, that ought to be mention'd, as if the rigid Tyranny of his Keeper, and the uncomfortable Solitude of his Priſon, had not added Weight enough to his Miſery, he was ſnatched from thence, and hurried into another Priſon, ſituated in ſo vile and unwholſome an Air, that the common Guards there, us'd to be frequently Chang'd for the Preſervation of their Health: But no Change, no Refreſhment was afforded for their captive Sovereign, he could breathe no Air, but noiſome Vapours, he was conſtrained to dwell with the contagious Sickneſs.

But the Cruelty of his Enemies can no longer contain it ſelf within the Bounds of this loathſome, deſolate Place; it longs to put

put on the Face of Authority, and to exert it ſelf upon a publick Theatre.

This *Man of Sorrows* is now conducted by one of the Refuſe of the People, to his capital City, and brought a Priſoner to his own Palace. And when the pretended Forms of injur'd Juſtice are fully prepar'd, and the Maſter-piece of Iniquity is ready for the Birth, he is carried as a Criminal into his own Court, and conſtrain'd to appear before an Aſſembly of Judges, compos'd of the very Dregs of Mankind, of the meaneſt Parentage, and the moſt ſcandalous Profeſſions, corrupted with the vileſt Principles, infamous for the moſt profligate Actions, and diſtinguiſhed only by their ſuperlative Wickedneſs.

Of this baſe Aſſembly, Two only were known to the King, before the Troubles began; and the Marks by which they were known, were his bountiful Favours to them, and their monſtrous Ingratitude to Him.

Before *this Synagogue of Satan*, he that was accountable only to God, was charg'd with Treaſon, which it was impoſſible for him to be Guilty of; with Murder, which his Soul abhorr'd; and with all thoſe Rapines, Spoils and Deſolations, which he had inceſſantly labour'd to prevent.

The unnatural Charge being read, the Preſident, whoſe unparallel'd Imprudence recommended him to that Office, inſolently Reprehended him for not ſhewing ſufficient Reſpect to that High Tribunal; and

having indulged his brutiſh Nature with every kind of Saucineſs, that his clamorous Tongue could expreſs, he preſumed to ask his Sovereign Lord, What Anſwer he had to make to that Impeachment?

But the undaunted Hero put them in Mind, that he was ſtill their King, and they his Subjects; and bravely refus'd to betray his Dignity, by owning their uſurp'd Authority.

No Tongue can perfectly deſcribe the Arrogance, with which the upſtart Preſident rebuked him, for diſallowing their pretended Juriſdiction; nor thoſe proud Menaces, with which he threatned to inflict that Judgment upon him, which the Law pronounces againſt thoſe that ſtand Mute, and obſtinately refuſe to Plead.

Your Humanity can hardly permit me to attend him back to his Priſon, to obſerve the Rudeneſs and Barbarity with which he was treated there, and to mention the ſeveral Provocations that were given him at a Second, Third, and Fourth Appearance, before this Bloody Tribunal: yet I cannot but treſpaſs ſo far, as to take Notice to you, that they were ſo Jealous of their own Guards, leſt they ſhould be wrought upon by the Influence of this innocent Prince, or by the Remorſe of their own Conſcience, upon the exerciſe of ſo much Barbarity, that they caus'd the Guards to be ſtill Chang'd, and the ſame Men were never ſuffer'd Twice to perform the ſame monſtrous Duty.

The

The Reproaches that were caſt upon him while he ſtood at his Trial, the Spitting in his Face, the offenſive Smoke that was blown upon him, and the pronouncing the horrible Sentence upon the moſt Innocent Perſon in the World, are enough to kindle your Impatience, if I ſhould ſpeak diſtinctly of them, and enough to compel you to ſay, Ariſe, and let us go hence.

But I muſt intreat You to follow him to his Croſs, and ſee the Extremity of his Sufferings. Behold his malicious Adverſaries preparing the Inſtruments of Cruelty, and intending to drag and bind him down to the Scaffold with Bands of Iron, if he ſhould refuſe to ſubmit to the fatal Stroke! Behold the faithful Prelate paying the laſt Inſtance of Duty to his beloved Sovereign, and taking his ſad Farewel, which nothing could enable him to ſuſtain, but an undoubted Aſſurance of their meeting in Heaven! Behold, (if you can yet bear to Behold) the Maſqued Executioner, performing his accurſed Office upon his Lawful King, in the Strength of his Years, in the midſt of his Kingdoms, his Friends and loving Subjects being helpleſs Spectators, and his Enemies inſolently Reviling and Triumphing over him, Living, Dying, and Dead!

Thus have we ſeen how much he Suffer'd, and are now to Conſider,

Secondly, How conſtantly he maintained his Faithfulneſs and Integrity through the

the whole Courſe, and even the Extremity of his Sufferings.

This indeed has in ſome Meaſure open'd it ſelf to our View already: For we could not well conſider how much he was Afflicted, without diſcerning how patiently he bore, how ſtedfaſtly he endured his Afflictions.

But we muſt dwell a little longer upon his amiable Example, and take a more particular Draught of his unſhaken Integrity.

Though his merciful Diſpoſition inclined him to comply almoſt too far with his rebellious Subjects, and to part with too much of his Power, for the ſake of the ineſtimable Bleſſing of Peace, yet it was always the chief and governing Principle of his Soul, to keep his Conſcience *as the Apple of his Eye*, to preſerve his Reaſon pure and untainted, to defend the Liberties of his People with an unalterable Reſolution, and to approve himſelf the faithful Guardian of the Church of God.

How ſolemn was that Proteſtation which he made at the Head of his Army. "I do promiſe in the Preſence of God Almighty, as I hope for his Bleſſing and Protection, that I will to the utmoſt of my Power defend and maintain the true reform'd Proteſtant Religion, eſtabliſh'd in the Church of *England*, and, by the Grace of God, in the ſame will Live and Die. I deſire to Govern by all the known Laws of the Land, and that the Liberty and Property of the Subject

ject may be preſerv'd, with the ſame Care, as my own juſt Rights; when I willingly fail in theſe Particulars, I will expect no Aid or Relief from any Man, or Protection from Heaven."

And how inviolably did he obſerve, how exactly did he fulfil, every Part of this ſolemn Promiſe!

When his Succeſſes enabled him to offer Terms to his People, He was ſo far from Encroaching upon them, that he expreſs'd a Fatherly Care of their Privileges, and gave them freſh Security and Protection; and when the Rebels loaded him with a Multitude of Propoſitions, though he was willing to grant, or rather had already granted, every thing that was reaſonable, yet he would not yield up any thing againſt the Impartial Judgment of Reaſon.

"This Honour (ſays he) They do me, to put me on the giving Part, which is more Princely and Divine. They cannot ask more than I can give, may I but reſerve to my ſelf the Incommunicable Jewel of my Conſcience, and not be forc'd to part with that, whoſe loſs nothing can repair or requite. The Love I have of my People's Peace hath indeed great influence upon me; but the Love of Truth and inward Peace hath more. That inward Quiet of my Conſcience ought to be, is, and ever ſhall be, by God's Grace, dearer to me than my Kingdoms. Nothing of Paſſion, or Peeviſhneſs, ſhall have any Byaſs upon my Judgment, to make me gratify

tify my Will, by denying any thing which my Reaſon and Conſcience commands me not; nor on the other ſide, will I conſent to more, than Reaſon, Juſtice, Honour, and Religion perſwade me to be for God's Glory, the Churches good, my Peoples Welfare, and my own Peace."

The ſame Pious and Manly Reſolution, that appear'd in his proſperous Condition, continued Stedfaſt and Entire, and loſt not one Jot of its Strength, in his calamitous State. The more he was tried in *the Furnace of Affliction*, ſo much the brighter his Integrity ſhone forth; and if we would ſee him in the Fulneſs of Glory, inſtead of making our Addreſſes to his Throne, we muſt viſit him in Priſon. Ask his perfidious Guards, enquire diligently of the moſt vigilant Spies, could they hear any expreſſions of Impatience fall from his Lips? did he betray any defection of Spirit, any weakneſs of Soul? did he not cleave to his Principles, and offer up unwearied Devotions to God? did he not ſupport his Dignity with a true Chriſtian Greatneſs of Mind? and did not the Majeſty of the King, break through the ſorrowful Diſguiſe of the Priſoner?

When the Offices of the Church were Aboliſh'd, and their Royal Defender was denied the ordinary Benefit of a Toleration, and depriv'd of the Preſence of his Chaplains, he never omitted the Divine Service, but was his own Chaplain in his Bed-chamber, and conſtantly us'd the Common-prayer by

by himſelf, bravely rejecting the officious Impertinence of the Presbyterian Miniſters, that rudely thruſt themſelves upon him.

Nor did he only Defend the Church by the Firmneſs of his Reſolution, but by the Clearneſs of Reaſon, and the Strength of his Arguments; ſuch ſtrong and convincing Arguments, as vanquiſh'd the mighty Champion of his Enemies, when he was under the Power of the Sword; for he was able to convert by his Tongue and his Pen, when he had no other Weapons to maintain his Cauſe.

It might juſtly have been expected, that the continued Succeſſion of his Misfortunes, the encreaſing Weight that was daily caſt upon him, and the long Duration of his Impriſonment, ſhould have broken his Spirits, and ſtifled the noble Thoughts that enrich'd his Breaſt; and though he could have preſerv'd the Purity of thoſe Thoughts, yet it might ſeem impoſſible that he ſhould readily bring them forth, and properly expreſs them, when he had been ſo long bereav'd of the Pleaſures of Converſation, and had no Opportunity of ſpeaking to any one, but the treacherous Spies of mercileſs Tyrants. Yet whenſoever he was call'd forth by the Propoſals of a Treaty, how chearfully, how eloquently did he Plead for the Rights of his Subjects, for the Laws of the Land, for the Doctrine, Diſcipline and Worſhip of the Church, and for the unalienable Revenues of the Clergy!

Tho'

Tho' a limited Number of his Friends were ſometimes permitted to remain at a convenient diſtance from him, that he might upon urgent Occaſions conſult with them, yet he was conſtrain'd ſingle and alone to *bear the Burthen of the Day, and* to ſtand *in the Fore-front of the hotteſt Battle,* aſſerting the Cauſe of Truth, and ſtopping the Invaſions of Sacrilege, againſt a multitude of Oppoſers.

And when he lay entirely at their Mercy, and the Church lay proſtrate with him; tho' they promis'd to reſtore to him all the Ancient Houſes, Mannors and Lands of the Crown, with their growing Rents and Profits, and to re-inſtate him in a Condition of Honour, Freedom and Safety, yet even then he would not concurr, in forcing any Man to take their wicked Covenant, nor would he renounce the Privilege of uſing the Common-prayer, nor would he aboliſh Epiſcopacy, nor would he conſent to an abſolute Alienation of the Lands of the Church, nor would he joyn in any illegal Act for taking away the Life, or Eſtate of any that had faithfully adher'd to him!

How great was that Integrity that ſtood the Teſt of ſo ſevere a Trial! How valuable was that Teſtimony which he gave as a King to the Church of God! How eminently was he a Martyr for it, ſince no Temptations of Life or Death could prevail with him to ſet his Hand to her Deſtruction, but he bravely held her up above the Waters, when he himſelf was Sinking, and *the proud Waves* were rolling over him! And

And his Affectionate Care did not reſt here, but deſcended as an Inheritance to his Poſterity. How ſtrict a Charge did he give to his Son! "I command You, upon my Bleſſing, to be conſtant to your Religion, neither hearkning to Roman Superſtition, nor the ſeditious and ſchiſmatical Doctrines of the Presbyterians and Independants; for know, that a perſecuted Church is not thereby leſs pure, though leſs fortunate. I command You, upon my Bleſſing, never to yield to any Conditions that are diſhonourable, though it were for the ſaving of my Life. Let their Reſolutions be never ſo Barbarous, the ſaving my Life by complying with them, would make me end my Days with Torture and Diſquiet of Mind. But your Conſtancy will make me Die chearfully, praiſing God for giving me ſo Gallant a Son. Above all I would have you (as I hope you are already) well-grounded and ſettled in your Religion, the beſt Profeſſion of which I have ever eſteemed that of the Church of *England*. In this I charge you to perſevere, as coming neareſt to God's Word for Doctrine, and to the Primitive Examples for Government."

In like manner he ſpake to one of the youngeſt of his Children, that he ſhould never be perſwaded or threaten'd out of the Religion of the Church, in which he hop'd he would be well Inſtructed, and for the Purity and Integrity whereof, he bid him remember that he had his Father's Teſtimony."

So

So Faithful was he to the Church, faithful even to Death! with what Joy did he give that final Teſtimony! how compos'd was his Countenance, when he appear'd before his inſolent Judges! with what Calmneſs did he receive their amazing Provocations! with what Patience did he hear the tumultuous Cries of the Souldiers! with what Evenneſs of Temper did he wipe off the Filth that was ſpit in his Face, ſaying to himſelf, "Chriſt has ſuffer'd more than this for my ſake!" with what generous Diſdain did he reject the ignominious Propoſals that were offer'd to him, even after he had receiv'd the fatal Sentence? "I had rather die a Thouſand Deaths, than thus to proſtitute my Honour and the Liberties of my People!" with what Zeal did he walk from his Palace to the Scaffold! how did he quicken the lingring Souldiers, telling them, He went before them to ſtrive for an Heavenly Crown, with leſs Fear and Anxiety than that with which he had often led his Souldiers to fight for an earthly Diadem. This Crown of Life was the only one he really valued, and this he recommended to his Son: "I hope (ſays he) God will give me and you that Grace, which will enable us to want, as well as wear a Crown, which is not worth taking up or enjoying upon Sordid, Diſhonourable and Irreligious Terms. Keep you to the true Principles of Piety, Virtue, and Honour, you ſhall never want a Kingdom."

For

For these glorious Principles, for the Laws of his Country, and for the purest Profession of the Faith, He was ready, He was willing, He was desirous to Die a Martyr; and having overcome his Enemies, by Forgiving and Praying for them, he committed himself to a merciful God, and even long'd to change his *Corruptible* for *an Incorruptible Crown*, and pass'd from this Kingdom of Troubles, into a *Kingdom that can never be mov'd*.

And now what remains, but that I should intreat you to reverence the Memory, and imitate the Example of the blessed King *CHARLES* the MARTYR.

Above all things study to preserve an honest Mind, and let no worldly Disadvantages, nor even Liberty, nor Life it self, be so dear to you as the Peace of your Conscience.

This was the pious King's inseparable Companion, his delightful Comforter, and his constant Friend. This supported him in his Distresses, and attended him in Prison; and he never found so much of the Life of Religion, and the Feast of a good Conscience, as when he came to the closest Conflicts with the Thoughts of Death.

And if you keep this sacred Charge inviolable, you will pass with safety thro' *this Vale of Sorrow*, and triumph over the Power of the Grave.

Let the Constancy of the Martyr encourage you to adhere to your Mother the Church, and to shew a true Value for her sacred Offices.

Many Princes and Nobles have earneſtly deſir'd to enjoy her excellent Form of Prayer, and could not obtain it.

Do you therefore make a juſt uſe of that ineſtimable Privilege that is vouchſafed to you, and expreſs that grateful Senſe of it, by continuing to frequent the Place of God's eſpecial Preſence, and joyning in the Communion of the Church. Let no Temptation prevail with you to ſeparate from her, whatever Dangers ſhall ariſe from Popery, Preſbytery, or Atheiſm: Let no Inſinuations, Promiſes, or Threatnings bereave you of your Integrity.

If God ſhould ever, for the Multitude of our Sins, permit her to fall under Perſecution, yet ſtill remember the Words of the King, A perſecuted Church is not thereby leſs Pure though leſs Fortunate. And whatſoever Loſſes you ſuſtain in Defence of ſo good a Cauſe, be aſſur'd that you will not loſe your Reward; for if you are *Faithful unto Death, The Lord will give you a Crown of Life.*

FINIS.

LAMBETH CHRISTIAN CANN